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WEEK-DAY LIVING

WEEK-DAY LIVING

A BOOK FOR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

BY

SAMUEL PEARSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "HOME TO GOD," ETC.

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1882

PREFACE.

THIS book has been written in the strong hope that it may do young men and women some amount of good. We seem to need a handbook of the secular side of life. Young people have very much most excellent religious instruction offered for their consideration. There are not many books, however, which condescend to the practical details of week-day living. The author has ventured to try to meet this want. One or two chapters have been added of a directly religious character. But, apart from these, the book seeks, in a comprehensive and yet in a concise way, to touch upon the main concerns of early life, in its everyday aspects.

More serious forms of address, like sermons, lectures, and treatises, will always hold an impor-

tant place in the literature provided for young men and women. But there is room for plain talk, not merely on the principles, but also on the practices of earnest life. The author has had some experience in dealing with the class for whom he writes, and he has sometimes found that a homely saying has reached farther than an elaborate argument. Common sense gains a hearing when loftier appeals pass only through the upper air. We cannot put old heads on young shoulders. These plain talks may perhaps beguile young heads on young shoulders into at least wise and prudent courses. The youthful world is not thirsting just now for an elaborate theological disquisition. Yet, with all its fun and laughter, it is not a frivolous world. There is room for the social teacher, if when he mounts the rostrum he will neither be too long nor too dry. Tediousness is an unpardonable sin in modern society. The author hopes that there will be no weariness to the flesh in these pages, but rather that they may help to make some readers both happier and wiser.

A slight scheme holds the different chapters

together. They treat of social, personal, mental, commercial, political, and, in some slight degree, of religious aspects in young life. How far the working out of this scheme will afford pleasant instruction to a fit audience remains to be seen. The author, having done his best to provide a *vademecum* for common life, must now leave his humble effort to the public.

LIVERPOOL, *January*, 1882.

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INTRODUCTORY
OUR STARTING-POINT

WEEK-DAY LIVING.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—OUR STARTING-POINT.

IF the following pages call forth a response from enlightened consciences they will answer their purpose. I am not writing in the spirit of a school-master or of a professor. I believe that there is a spirit in man which responds to what is generous in sentiment, and that there is a sense of righteousness which gains a hearing for good advice, especially through the quietness of the printed page. Though I shall adopt a free and conversational style, I shall ever be mindful of the dignity which belongs to every reader who may glance over these pages. That dignity arises from the fact of our Divine origin. God has made us. He has spoken to us by the voices of prophets, He has redeemed us by His Son, and He has created a conscience within

every breast. These great facts constitute our starting-point.

The will of God has been specially revealed to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. But God has other ways of directing our attention to His laws. The realms of knowledge are vast and varied. While therefore I shall draw authoritative statements and counsels from the supernatural revelation of the Divine Mind, I shall not confine myself to this source. The natural is also sacred. Our physical and mental frame is stamped with a Divine purpose. The laws which govern our social well-being are in their essence eternal, and they demand therefore our closest attention. Common sense is not infallible ; but its dictates ought to be listened to respectfully. Great writers and preachers often echo the utterances of Divine wisdom. Poets and thinkers, upright men of business, and social reformers may all teach us something about the conduct of life. All these voices are ~~useful~~ in as far as they communicate the Divine law to us. I shall therefore freely use them when it suits the purpose I have in view.

That purpose is to induce every reader, and especially every young reader, to make the best of life. Life includes in itself all other gifts. It means duty and sorrow, care and rest, joy and

reward. We see many around us making the worst of life. Sometimes they do so for "want of thought." There are few, indeed, who deliberately choose the path of ruin. They drift into bad courses, without meaning to do so. Yet none the less are they ruined. Their histories offer sad and terrible warnings against the frivolity and carelessness of youth. And if therefore these pages do but lead you to serious thought, the labour of composing them will by no means be thrown away. It is true that thought alone will not serve us. There must be action, decision, energy. But it is at least something gained, if we stop to ask why we were created, what is our business here, how we may know our duty, and on what authority the claims of duty are urged upon us.

We take at once, then, the highest standpoint, and desire to press your early obligations upon you on Divine authority. For whatever is sanctioned not only by Christianity, but by an enlightened conscience, is from God. In nothing, therefore, are we left to absolute choice. If there is a right tone about us there will be a bias in our minds in favour of duty, however hard it may be. And to that bias I at once and unhesitatingly appeal. I am far from wishing to pester you with my own opinions. I choose the humble task of

being an interpreter of the Divine Will about you, as that Will is variously communicated to us. Of patent medicines for the cure of moral diseases I know nothing, and desire to know nothing. You will, I hope, find no nostrums and quack pills recommended to you in these pages. I have no short cuts to happiness to open up to you ; I know of no side doors by which I can admit you to the temple of truth. All that I can hope to do is to clear away some of the grass and weeds that grow apace on the King's highway, and to rewrite a few faded letters on the old-fashioned finger-posts.

“HOME, SWEET HOME.”

CHAPTER II.

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

I SHALL have something to say in future chapters about the management of a home of your own. Before you set up house for yourself you are living under your parents' roof. Even if you are away from home you owe allegiance to those who love you, and who more than any on earth are interested in your happiness and prosperity. There is a stage between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six which is not easily got over. The young man or the young woman does not so easily yield to authority as before. Some parents are not wise enough to see the new period, and to moderate their commands accordingly. If, however, parents are not perfect, there is no excuse for ingratitude on the part of sons and daughters. I call it gross ingratitude to assert independence^s too soon, and to show no respect for the wishes and, if you will, the prejudices of those to whom we owe so much.

The period when children are grown up, and before they launch out into the world, ought to be one of great and exceptional happiness to parents. It is in your power to make it so in your own case.

The leading principle of your conduct should be to consult the wishes of your father and mother. They may desire you to do things that appear disagreeable ; but if these things are not absolutely wrong, do them. You chafe at the idea of authority. You do not like to be tied to your mother's apron-strings. You are creating a circle of companions for yourself apart from the friendships which your parents have made for you. It would be pleasanter, so you think, to be independent, and to go your own way.

Let us look at the matter on the lowest ground. You do not yet pay your way. You are not earning enough to contribute your proper share to the board and lodging which are freely yours, so long as you are a child at home. But even supposing that you are in an independent monetary position, the relationship itself which exists between you and your parents is sufficient to point out your duty.

What is the true idea of home ? It is the place where we may share our duties and our enjoyments in common. This common sympathy is the

very thing which throws such a charm about home life, and which makes it the source and scene of the best discipline. As you grow out of youth to early manhood or womanhood, you are admitted more freely into the cares and concerns of the heads of the household. You discover the existence of many anxieties, and also of many joys and memories, whose presence you had not before suspected. You become intelligent and conscious sharers in the life of the family.

Now, it is highly desirable that you should not set up a secret life of your own, and shut yourself up to brood over sorrows of your own. The practices of childhood should be continued, and a habit of frankness about your pursuits and ambitions should be cultivated. It is a very mischievous thing for young people to get to think that their elders take no interest in their doings. There is, of course, a natural difference of disposition and taste between parents and children. But the hearts of the old are kept fresh and green by constant contact with the ambitions of the young. I need hardly say, therefore, that your parents, so long as you are under their roof, have every right to know how you spend your leisure hours, what friendships you form, what kind of books you read, and what progress you are making

in your business or your studies. Information on these points is all the more desirable when you are in a strange town or city. Who can tell the anxious moments through which parents pass, and the earnest prayers they offer, when their sons or daughters are far away? A regular letter, at least once a week, will be a great comfort to them and a safeguard to yourself.

Some young men do much to ruffle the peace of home. They are irregular in their hours. They are not present at the breakfast hour, and make few appearances at family prayer. They bully their younger brothers or sisters, and imagine that the universe has been made for their benefit. They spend no evenings at home. The place is too dull. No wonder, when they save up all their spleen and ill temper to be vented within its walls. Their amusements are found away from home, and so, as far as they are concerned, it has no pleasant associations.

There are a thousand ways of making home happy. Every inmate may contribute something to its instruction or pleasure. The long winter evenings may be beguiled by reading aloud some good lively book. The art of conversation may be learned and practised in the social circle. New games may be introduced, or old ones be re-

vived. The younger members of the family ought to receive some kindly and timely assistance in the preparation of their lessons. Each one might cultivate some special branch of accomplishments. Music and painting are great resources for those who acquire a taste for them. - China-painting has come into vogue during the last few years. The decoration of the walls, and of the door panels, and the making of sensible coverings for the backs of chairs and couches, may well occupy the leisure hours of some. What we need is that the talent or accomplishment which young people possess should be unselfishly used for the happiness of others. There are sure to be great fretfulness and friction in any home that is self-contained. Constant contact with the outside world is necessary, both as a matter of duty and as a healthy stimulus to pleasure.

Young men might well tell their sisters of what is going on in the political world, and sometimes read out a good speech by one of the great Parliamentary leaders. The main drift of business, the general concerns of commerce, might be of occasional interest in the home circle. Fathers would do well to make companions of their growing boys, and mothers might share some of their mental responsibilities with their growing

girls. There is a common stock of thought which belongs to a family, and to this each member should bring a daily and a cheerful contribution.

What the elder sons and daughters have to avoid is a feeling that their parents' home is not theirs. The transitional state tends to make them uneasy and flighty, and they often cause great and unnecessary anxiety to those who love them most. A thoughtful heart and a watchful eye will enable them to see in what particulars they may contribute to the peace and joy of the family circle. The sixpences often squandered in self-indulgence would help to buy some trifling delicacy, some new pamphlet, or some popular paper, which, small in itself, would yet show a thoughtfulness which would go straight to a parent's heart. And a daughter's deft fingers doing the mother's sewing, or her ready hand taking the dust from a piece of furniture, or her culinary skill displayed in the kitchen, might do more for the comfort of the mother than the most splendid performance of one of Beethoven's sonatas.

The home, as we have said, must be kept in fresh and ever-renewed contact with the outside world. Young women languish for want of a mission. Perhaps they have been repelled from religious work by over-zealous ecclesiastics or

pietistic parents. It may not be exactly their fault that they do not care for tract distribution or for Sunday school teaching. In such cases they would, however, do well to find some substitute. The Kyrle Society, whose object is to apply art to the homes and lives of the poor, might at least afford some scope for their repressed energy. And when young men are, unfortunately for themselves, cut off from the direct work of the Christian Church, they might at least aid in efforts to induce habits of thrift and temperance among the indigent. The sweetness and light at our command must be diffused before they will condense in the calm circle of home.

FRIENDS *AND* FRIENDS.

CHAPTER III.

FRIENDS *AND* FRIENDS.

MOST people think that they know everything that can be said upon this subject. The commonplaces upon friendship are innumerable ; and for that very reason practical knowledge of the subject is at a discount. We are often ashamed to ask information about the things of which we are supposed to know everything. Besides which, does not friendship grow spontaneously ? No ! not exactly. The best and most fruitful associations have a large amount of choice in them. They do not grow of themselves. They are the result of thought as well as of impulse. And if so, we must not too easily take for granted that we know all about the subject of friendship.

A perfect friendship is often like a perfect picture. All the world flocks to see it, and most people are capable of admiring it. It is one thing, however, to admire and another to make. The

friendship of Jonathan and David has not often been repeated in the world's history, though many seem to suppose that it is the type of very common and frequently recurring companionships. There are very few men who fit in one to another as did those two. Where they exist circumstances do not, perhaps, bring them together. We regard a perfect and life-long friendship as a rare occurrence. When it does occur, its value cannot be fully estimated. I would venture, therefore, to put you on your guard against treating this subject lightly—against fancying that it is in your power, at any time and in any place you please, to make a good friend. It seems an easy thing to do ; but, like most important things in life, it is one of the hardest. May you be successful in this ! The first requisite is to lay aside self-conceit.

No young man is absolutely without comrades or chums ; no young woman is entirely without companions. These are useful as a kind of body-guard. We take them up, and they take us up, on high days and holidays. We go on the excursion with them, or join them at cricket or in boating, or in the debating society, or in the concert room. The selection of these is important. Their characters must tell upon ours, and ours upon theirs. Supposing them to be well inclined, they

will intensify the good within us. But if they have bad tastes, we may strive against them and argue with them to our hearts' content; but they will, sooner or later, injure our moral disposition. There is nothing for it but to shun the bad and to avoid the doubtful, and to cut ourselves clean off from the vicious. We have no right to be in their company. But we may do them good? If that is our object, let us go as open and avowed missionaries. We know well enough that this is not the object of comradeship. Its sole purpose is pleasure and mutual help. You have no right to sacrifice your moral nature to your life of ease. The highest part of your manhood must be your chief concern. You are not strong enough to stand against the avowed tendencies of your chosen companions. Enough temptation of this kind will come to you from those who work side by side with you in business, and from those whom you meet casually, and almost without your choice, in society. You cannot barter away your chosen hours and cherished associations under the delusion that you will do good. Whenever you propose to do good, do not begin by compromising your fair name, or by tampering with your own sense of right. You do but paralyze your arm, and write yourself down either a hypocrite or a self-deceiver.

I make these remarks about comrades because these are the only kind of friends which some people have. Friends in the truest sense they cannot be said to have.

By a friend I do not mean a patron. Friendship is reciprocal and two-sided ; patronage is one-sided. There are seasons in life when we need the help of those above us in station or age or experience. This help is often freely given ; and it should be graciously and gratefully received. Your independent fellow, brusque and rude and loud-mouthed, who "never received a favour and never will," is not one of the most agreeable specimens of young manhood. Some of the most beautiful relations which exist between man and man have sprung up from the help which the strong have given to the struggling. Many artists and literary men could tell touching stories of the way in which their loneliness was lightened and their early difficulties removed by timely and friendly help. So it has been with the capitalist or the young tradesman. Dr. Johnson would have been a mellowed man if he had met with early and kindly encouragement. Chatterton might have been saved from the crime of suicide if some sagacious adviser had taken him by the hand. Luther contracted a few memorable friendships ;

but he knew also how to receive a favour. A thousand blessings be on the German housewife who took compassion on his youth and gave him food, and love, which was better than food, during his schoolboy days ! It is, no doubt, a fine idea to push your way alone in life ; but practically it cannot often be done. Nor if it could, would it be desirable. Dependence without servility is the soil on which the virtues of kindness, thoughtfulness, and gratitude grow. You need never be a parasite, a mere humble follower, a kind of fawning spaniel. Retain your manhood. But your manhood does not forbid you from receiving help to help yourself, especially when it is freely offered or generously given. If grace is needed to offer such friendly help, no less grace is needed to receive it. This is not, however, perfect friendship. It is friendliness. It is often a very beautiful kind of friendship itself ; the strong and the weak associating together for mutual benefit. But there is always too much inequality to allow it to be perfect.

A certain amount of equality is necessary to true friendship. This equality is one of the imponderable things in life ; it can neither be measured nor weighed. By equality we do not mean sameness or identity. Far from it. The most precious associations are those which, being based on simi-

larities, are nevertheless cemented by dissimilarities. But equality in the best things must be at the root. Accidents may differ, but essences will be the same. There have been some fine specimens of friendship between those who occupied very different social positions. But in all these cases, social inequalities were more than made up by intellectual and moral unities. Baron Stockmar and Prince Albert were fast friends, though one occupied a comparatively obscure position, and the other one of the most exalted places in the land. But what Stockmar lacked in circumstance he possessed in sterling qualities of mind, and thus he could be received on an equality even in the royal palace of England.

If then we step out of our own social circle in order to make friends, it must be done on good grounds. Friendship is not indeed based on social considerations chiefly, but on those which are mental and moral. But the social element is not to be overlooked, and where it involves the other two, or rather is associated with the other two, it cannot be ignored. We are not to make either ourselves, or our friends, or our relatives uncomfortable by the ties which we form, unless there is some pressing and overwhelming reason. Human nature is sufficiently varied to afford us plenty of scope for choice in our own class. We should

avoid contracting or inflicting social penalties by our friendships. A friendship which will not allow us to eat meat at our friend's table, or invite him to partake of our hospitality, is often a hollow sham, or at the least it is but an uncomfortable arrangement.

What I counsel; then, is deliberation about this important matter. Be careful not to drift into friendships. Before you close this chapter enumerate those among your acquaintances who are likely to make desirable friends. Scan their virtues; ask whether there are those among them whom you could safely and certainly choose out as fellow-helpers to all that is highest and best in your nature and in theirs. Take a two-sided view of the case. Think what will probably benefit them, as well as what will probably benefit yourself. If you find none such, then be content to remain at present without any close friends. Better to have none at all, than spurious and injurious ones. Be content to wait. Do not be like the young lady who, meeting another and a perfect stranger in a railway waiting-room, said, "A sudden thought strikes me; let us swear eternal friendship." Such friendships are far from being eternal. Their fickleness wears a ludicrous aspect; but they are none the less injurious. They minister to a volatile

disposition, and prevent the character from gaining a proper steadfastness.

Link yourself, then, only with those who will help to elevate your tastes, refine your feelings, purify your conscience, and ennoble your character. Fellow-workers in Christian enterprise are often the truest friends. Noble aims and lofty work shared in common breathe Heaven's own inspiration into a friendship. Then we feel that they are not born to die. Paul and Silas will ever be linked in the history of the early struggles of the Gospel. So in later times the names and friendship of Luther and Melanchthon will ever wear a golden charm. The strifes of political life lose their bitterness when we see the Duke of Wellington weeping like a child in the House of Lords as he pays his tribute of respect to Sir Robert Peel. And John Bright's eloquence surpassed itself when in the House of Commons he sank down into his seat, unable to speak a few sentences about his friend and comrade Richard Cobden.

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The ball-room, the concert-room, the circus, the evening party, and the billiard table are far from being the best places in which to choose friends. And for this reason amongst others, that they are places for amusement. Friendship is a serious thing ; it is one of the most important influences

in the formation of character. It should therefore be built with care and solidity. Character must be at its base, and united aims and objects must be its bonds. This character and these aims must be above all things Christian. Without these conditions there may be acquaintanceship, comradeship, and if we may coin a word or two, chumship, morning-callship, hail-fellow-well-metship, host or guestship, coteriesship, and noddling-in-the-streetship ; but there will be no true and lasting friendship.

MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE.

WE reserve this kind of friendship for separate treatment; for it is the best and most important of all. Men make or mar themselves by marriage. So do women. We are writing this chapter for both sexes. Each must choose out what is appropriate. We shall not always say whether we write for a young man or a young woman. Most sound advice on this subject is equally important and applicable to both. If the wooing is on the man's side, choice ought to be equally on both sides. To accept an offer is as serious a piece of business as to make one. If any language on this subject seems to imply more, it is because the man has certain active responsibilities which do not belong to the woman. But it would be a fatal blunder to suppose that marriage is therefore a more important and solemn engagement to one than to the other.

One of the responsibilities belonging specially to the man is the provision of ways and means. Till a man has a prospect of maintaining a wife in tolerable comfort he has no right to bind her by an engagement. Let her be free. A common understanding is, generally speaking, much more satisfactory than slow years of engagement. If the young lady takes advantage of her freedom to flirt, or to marry another, it is evident that her affections were never fully engaged. The elasticity of an understanding is in such a case better for both parties than vows made to be broken. We are not advocating such misleading things as understandings. They are often fruitful of misunderstandings, and should be avoided. A man's mind had better not be turned earnestly to marriage till he begins to see his way in business. Let him keep his own heart free, till he discovers whether he can offer a home as well as a hand to the woman of his choice. To avoid imprudent marriages, let the young beware of imprudent understandings and engagements.

In order to a happy marriage the following things, amongst others, are necessary : (1) Common consecration to Christ ; (2) similarity of education and tastes ; (3) love ; (4) and a comfortable home.

I will begin at the last and lowest thing of all. I am not writing for princesses, or for lords and ladies, but for those who are content with homely ways, and who, if they are to marry at all, must do so with the determination to practise frugality. If you want to be happy, see to it that both you and your future wife are content with humble beginnings. A good wife will be willing and anxious to share the early struggles as well as the later successes of her husband. She will not want to sit in her stiff bridal dress, on brand new furniture, doing a little crochet work all the year round. She will be ready to be a fellow-worker, in some shape or form. Many young couples begin too ambitiously. They should take the lowest seat at first, and they would not fail to rise in life. They could at least hardly have the humiliation of falling. There is a happy mean between squalor and baseness on the one hand, and pretentiousness and display on the other.

A young man should ask himself the plain question as to whether he can furnish a house, before he puts another and a far more serious question to the lady of his affections, "*Furnish on the hire system!*" What an abomination this is! You bring your wife to a house which is not your own. The table off which you eat your first

meal is laden with debt. The chairs on which you invite your visitors to sit are not your own, and may be seized by the furniture dealer. But you are sure of keeping up the payments. Are you? I knew a couple where the husband was stricken down with most serious illness a year after they were married. Fortunately the snug little cottage in which they lived was filled with furniture all their own, and they had a little beside in the bank to fall back upon. It is the key of your position never to begin married life in debt, and determine ever after never to fall into debt. Cash *versus* credit ; possession instead of hire ; ownership *versus* borrowing—these are antitheses worth framing, if you cannot remember their importance in any other way. If your future wife has some means of her own, so much the better. But in any case it is your duty to provide the home, and to insure your life. These are two things that may reasonably be expected from every honourable young man. In the course of married life wife and husband will then be able to live without carking care. And in the melancholy case of a husband's premature death, his companion will not be left to meet the first dread loneliness with the additional pangs of poverty. I could tell some distressing tales of sorrow caused by the negligence of young

husbands either to insure their lives, or, when insured, to keep up their policies. And I could tell tales almost as distressing where all the trouble came because the man had neglected to make his will. For thoughtless cruelty few negligences exceed this. The will should be made and signed on the wedding day. But *verbum sap.*

It is not easy to say how much a young man ought to have saved before he ventures forth on married life. Tastes differ, and so do means. All we would venture to say is: Have a few things good, rather than many showy articles of furniture which last about a year and a day. Strong tables and solid chairs, rather than polished veneer supported by rickety legs.

The young woman should have a frugal mind. She should not be too ambitious, nor too exacting. If you want to find out whether she is domestic, do not confine your calls at her parents' house to the evening. Drop in for a book in the morning. If her hair waits the morning toilette, and the stitch in time has not saved ninety and nine, and, in other words, you discover that she is a slut, then you had better take the book back speedily and borrow no more. But if you find her neat and clean at the wash-tub, or with hands well whitened with flour, or with the needle busy

mending the torn clothes of the household, then call again.

Perhaps this book may get into higher society, where the young women never do such menial things. Let them not, however, be ashamed to make occasional descents into the kitchen. Even if they have servants to relieve them of all these tasks, as I hope they may have, they will be all the better housewives for knowing how to turn their hands to anything. One of the secrets of good household management is a thorough knowledge of details. And this can only be obtained by actual experience.

But a comfortable home is by no means the chief requisite for a happy married life. That love is absolutely necessary is "the old, old story." But it is one which I fear every young person has to learn anew. There is no teaching it by example or by warning. For lack of genuine, honest, and deep affection the brightest prospects have been darkened or altogether ruined. Whatever the advantages which may be offered, no one has the right to enter on this solemn compact without a full engagement of the affections. It is altogether a delusion to dream that affection will be created after marriage, if it has not been originated beforehand. There have been a few

instances of sudden, sharp engagements which have ended happily. But the vast majority of such beginnings have had bad and miserable endings. "Marry in haste and repent at leisure." Marry without love and live without happiness. Hence all match-makers are to be avoided. Love refuses to arise under the spell of a third party. Advertising for a wife is execrable. In these sacred matters nature is the best teacher. You must be left to her promptings. And when your heart tells you that you are contemplating an engagement with some one for the sake only of getting settled, or because there is "a little property" in the case, then act the part of honour and refuse to compromise yourself or another either by making or receiving proposals.

You may easily grow cynical about property or about comfort. You will not expose the woman of your choice to poverty. But if she is of the right sort she will not shrink from sharing some of your early struggles. Those have often been the happiest marriages where the young couple began in a very humble way, determined to make the best of everything, and to live within their means. Few things are more sickening than for a wife to profess profound ignorance about her husband's early poverty. Where there is honest

love, simple and frugal fare will often be more acceptable than the daintiest dishes of a king. With what a graphic hand has Burns described the joys of a simple, unpretending home-life in his inimitable "Cotter's Saturday Night." Take away from it all that is rustic, and though you have robbed it of much of its peculiar flavour, yet underneath you find the immortal lineaments which describe the pleasures of true love. On the other hand, contrast with this Tennyson's "Northern Farmer, New Style." In this vigorous and powerful piece the Laureate has compressed the very essence of vulgarity and of metallic worldliness. It is a grim piece of humour which satirizes the money-grubbing notions of people who can speak purer, though not more powerful, English than the earthy and earthly old farmer. There are many who would be ashamed to talk in the following strains, but they think and act them to the very life :—

"Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-tälkin' o' thee ;
 Thou's been talkin' to muther, an' she beän a-tellin' it me.
 Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's
 lass—

Noä—thou'll marry fur luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks
 tha an ass.

* . * * *

"Do'ant be stunt : taäke time : I knaws what maäkes tha sa
 mad.

Warn't I craazed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad ?

But I know'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this :
' Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is ! ' ”

The man who gives this advice to his son does not know the sacredness and the deep fellowship involved in the marriage bond. He has sunk into the mire of the commonplace. He has no wings, no inspiration. He must be left to trudge along the flat, dull paths of the prosaic, with no music to cheer him except the cantering hoofs that echo his own sordid thoughts : “ Proputty,” “ proputty,” “ proputty.” Other and loftier advice may smack of the romantic. It is, however, the only prudent wisdom. Marry for love. Let all earthly things be secondary to this first requisite of domestic happiness.

Love consists in the fellowship of two kindred spirits. There must, therefore, be similarity of mental culture and of tastes. The thirst for knowledge should not be extinguished by the ignorance or apathy of a life-long companion. Many young women give up all their interest in education, in literature, and in political progress when they become wives and mothers. Their husbands do not encourage their higher tastes. The man has, perhaps, a monopoly of the newspaper and of the books from the library. And so, with a sigh, he wonders why she sinks into such a household

drudge. Let him try to interest her in the affairs of the outside world, and the home would be all the more cheerful, and the making up of the weekly accounts would be much less irksome.

On the other hand, it is the woman's duty to seek to keep up her interest in those things which will awaken and keep alive their mutual mental activity. A young man's hobbies should never be laughed out of the house. His collection of geological specimens, or his cases of butterflies, or his little library of books should be sacred. He will be the better pleased when he finds his young wife getting to know the different fossils, and anxious during the summer holiday to add a few specimens. If there is to be this mental companionship, it should be thought of before courtship, not after. Let there be no useless bickerings and snarlings about want of sympathy when once the decided step has been taken. There is nothing open then but to make the best of it on both sides. But the main thing in reference to this point is, to see that there is in each a capacity for progress in the same direction. To be able to understand the same things is a first-rate qualification for being able to understand one another. Few pleasures are to be compared with that of being able to read together the same

books, to cultivate the same tastes, and to be able to take the same point of view in reference to subjects that may be engaging public attention. A quick, ready, intelligent mind will stand you in better stead by far than a pretty face. And to the woman we say : Beware of the handsome young man of faultless tailoring, who can do nothing more than whisper nonsense in your ear. There are many such shallow-brained fellows around you. But if you have common sense and a fair share of mind, be sure that there is not one of this sort who can make you happy.

But spiritual fellowship is essential to real conjugal happiness. I have never known a perfect marriage without this. A fair amount of happiness can, of course be obtained without such sympathy ; but the cup is never full. It is a vain delusion to enter on the married state with the hope of leading your husband or wife, as the case may be, to become a Christian. This matter ought to be settled before the affections are engaged ; it is rarely settled after. As to the form of Christianity and the profession, I must leave my reader to come to his own conclusion. All I contend for is a genuine consecration to Christ and loyalty to the Saviour's commands on the part of both. Who can picture the joys of united love to God on the

part of husband and wife? Where is the bitterness to be compared with estrangement on this vital point? Earth has no fairer sight to show than that of a Christian bride and bridegroom pledging their troth one to the other. Christ is there to ratify the vows.

“’Tis He who clasps the marriage band
And fits the spousal ring,
Then leaves ye kneeling, hand in hand.

* * * * *

Only kneel on, nor turn away
From the pure shrine, where Christ to-day
Will store each flower, ye dutious lay,
For an eternal wreath.” *

* Keble’s “Christian Year,” “Matrimony.”

THREE WAYS OF USING MONEY.

CHAPTER V.

THREE WAYS OF USING MONEY.

THESE three ways are spending, saving, and giving. We cannot do better than give you three Latin sentences which convey the moral underlying these methods:—

Quod expendi, habui. What I spent, I had.

Quod servavi, perdididi. What I saved, I lost.

Quod donavi, habeo. What I gave, I have.

It is a good thing to drink in the spirit of these sentences at the outset of life. They do not contain a whole truth, but they convey a very lofty one. He who takes home their warnings and encouragements could never become a mere money-grubber. Money is but an instrument for man's use ; and he has surely found out the best means of employing it, who obtains or circulates the greatest amount of happiness through its agency. The givers of society are often regarded as a set of harmless fanatics ; but they often show far

more solid sense than the spenders, and certainly far more than the spendthrifts of society. Money is the symbol of wealth. We are not speaking in this chapter of mere coin ; we are referring to that of which it is the recognized standard. Your labour fetches so much in the market. You are paid in cash ; but you may also be paid in influence and in power. Milton only received £10 for "Paradise Lost ;" * yet his labour was well expended, and in the end was well rewarded. You will make a great mistake if you value everything in life by a money standard ; and our views of the worth of life's achievements will affect the way in which we use money. The weathercock shows which way the wind is blowing ; and so a man's method of employing his wealth will reveal his mind and purpose.

Very much domestic happiness depends upon the art of buying. I am writing for people with limited incomes, not for those of boundless wealth : for the many, not for the few. To these, then, I say that the following rules will, if acted upon, be of immense service to you :—

* Milton received £5 down, and was to receive three subsequent instalments of £5 each after the sale of three editions. Milton received £10, and his widow received £8 in the year 1680, in discharge of all claims.—Masson's "Life of Milton," vol. vi. pp. 509, 780.

1. Always buy for cash.
2. Always spend less than you receive.
3. Always buy the best in quality, or as good as you can afford.
4. Always keep an account of your expenses.

Perhaps the first of these rules is the most important; for, in a large measure, it covers all the others. If you buy for cash you will be forced to keep within the limits of your income. A few weeks of self-denial will enable you to get cash in hand, instead of being always indebted to your future earnings. The coat will wear a little longer; the dress need not be laid aside for a few weeks. It is astonishing how soon you will get accustomed to say contentedly, "I can't afford it." Payment down, means a free mind, lower prices, an independent spirit, and, above all, honesty. In nothing will the co-operation of man and wife be needed more than in this. If the wife is to be kept without a new dress, the man must do without a new suit. Mutual sacrifices will provoke many a merry laugh; and care will be kept at arm's length so long as the dangerous art is not learned of "running up bills." I need not say that husband and wife should have no secrets from one another. There must be no unpaid accounts of which the one does not speak to the other. This is a wretched

state of things. But, apart from this, my point is that, both before and after marriage, neither young man nor young woman should run into debt. There are many tradesmen and money-lenders who would be only too glad to get you into their meshes. Never enter a shop without having the money for your purchase in your pocket. The most depressing things to people of small means are "doctors' bills." It is not that the money is grudged. Far from it. There are few workers whose art is more highly appreciated by all classes than those who attend our sick friends. But they are called in on emergencies, and their fees accumulate till they seem exceedingly large. Here again, I say, the best plan is to pay cash. But the doctor would be offended! Try him. Tell him that you hate doctors' bills, but that you are only too glad to pay him his charges, and, if he is a sensible man, he will tell you what to give him at every visit or so. If he is not sensible, why ask him to attend you? You mean to pay him, you prefer to pay cash; and in nine cases out of ten he would prefer to receive cash. If you prefer to pay these and other matters in a lump sum, see that you have a margin to fall back upon. Do not live too near your income. Pay your savings bank the cash, and take it out when required. You will escape

many of the distresses of life if you determine to act on the scriptural principle, "Owe no man anything."

If you would lead a free and comfortable life, and be able to look every man straight in the face, never incur a single debt. By severe measures it is generally, almost universally, possible to keep out of debt; and more especially in the case of young men. A young man once wrote to me from respectable lodgings to say that he was £10 in debt, and to ask my advice. I replied, "Go into cheaper lodgings, and live on bread and water till you have paid every farthing." I fear that he would have been more grateful for a bank-note, but it would not have done him half the good. People are often ashamed to reduce their expenditure, lest it should lower them in the eyes of their friends. But what are such friends worth? There are many who will come and eat at your table so long as your credit lasts, who will only call you a "poor devil" or a fool, if you have to make a composition with your creditors. It is better to dare public opinion by going into a smaller house or by taking mean apartments, than to be ever on the brink of an exposure. A crust paid for, tastes sweeter than a rich dish eaten at the expense of the tradesman. Keep out of debt.

One of the best plans, if not the very best, of keeping out of debt is to learn very early in life the art of saving. There are three classes of persons. First, those who live beyond their income; secondly, those who live up to their income; and, thirdly, those who live under it. Wise people belong to the third class. When a young man has no one depending upon him he ought to leave a good margin for saving purposes. When he gets married he will need a lump sum with which to buy furniture. He should try, therefore, to save twenty-five per cent. of his income, if he can. This should be done steadfastly every week. Few people have a due conception of the immense sums that may be accumulated in this way. Supposing a youth of sixteen to begin saving. For the first year he saves 1s. a week; for the second year, 2s. 6d. a week; for the next three years, 5s. a week; for the next three years, 10s. a week; for the next four years, £1 per week. By the time he is twenty-eight years of age he will have saved £334 2s.; and this, with the addition of interest, will be a respectable sum with which to begin life. It is important to point out to those who have no property to fall back upon, that life insurance is one of the first means of saving which should be

adopted. Most of the companies allow the sum assured to be paid after the lapse of a certain number of years, whether death has occurred or not. Young widows are often left unprovided for, when even a small sacrifice per annum would have insured them against destitution in the hour of their sorrow.

As to giving, this is closely connected with the subject of saving. There can be no joyful giving unless the money has been kept back purposely for benevolent objects. Giving becomes a kind of tax when it is drawn from the ordinary income, and is deducted from that which would otherwise be spent on luxuries or necessities. A certain percentage should be retained for giving purposes ; and if this is done, the act of giving affords nothing but pure pleasure. This percentage ought to be increased with an augmenting income. It is a scandalous thing when a prosperous man retains the same scale of giving which he adopted in the first years of early struggles. The amounts given to benevolent objects of all kinds would be amazingly increased if all well-disposed persons set apart a fixed sum every week for these purposes. Begin early. Give at least five per cent. of your earnings. Increase this percentage as you prosper. A very rich man

ought to be giving at least half his ordinary income away. There are few pleasures to be compared with that which is associated with a thoughtful beneficence.

Our philanthropic societies are often supported by the few only. The proportion of subscribers to charity to the population of any given town is startlingly small. This is partly to be accounted for from the fact that our institutions practically limit themselves to the guinea subscription. The overwhelming majority of people cannot afford this sum, and as a consequence give nothing. The habit of making it easy to give small sums should be cultivated by the charitable and religious societies which appeal to the public for aid. But in any case the givers of society should be reinforced by our humble contributions. We need not, and should not, excuse ourselves from what is both a duty and a privilege because we have no great means at our disposal. Cheerful giving at the commencement of life is an essential element in the art of living well.

THREE THINGS ALWAYS ON
HAND.

CHAPTER VI.

THREE THINGS ALWAYS ON HAND.

THE smoothness of social life depends upon very simple conditions. There are some who are always in "hot water." No sooner have they settled one difference than they begin another. Yet, when we examine such people, we find that they are very often good at heart. It is no deep and radical defect which brings them into such frequent collisions with their neighbours. They are not people of evil dispositions and purposes. Yet the results of their behaviour are just the same as if they fully intended to bring confusion and misery everywhere in their path. So much do we depend for social comfort upon what is almost external, that we can often "get on" better with a bad-minded man whose manners are good, than with one who is good at heart but exceedingly rough in his demeanour. It is not, therefore, right that we should neglect qualities which make for

the benefit both of ourselves and of the friends and acquaintances with whom we mix. I propose, therefore, to call your attention to three things especially, which you should always have on hand. They should be, so to speak, at the very tips of your fingers. When you are most off your guard, you should be so much in the habit of using them, that, like a faithful dog, they shall at your call spring at once to your side.

I. A GOOD TEMPER.

This is the first. A good temper depends in some measure upon the state of the body. Yet it would be a mistake to imagine that when the *physique* is weak and nervous, the man must necessarily be cross-grained in mind. Temper is very much a thing of will, of watchfulness, and of habit. Some, no doubt, find its cultivation much more easy than others do. But all may possess it, if they but use the means necessary for its attainment. It is closely connected with a slow judgment. A man who gives himself time to form his opinions, who determines to hear both sides, will generally be of an even temper. The hot and hasty temper belongs to the man who easily decides and at once jumps to a conclusion.

These conclusions generally concern self. And it is this fact which disturbs the proper equilibrium of the mind. If a man fancies that his own rights are being invaded, he at once fires up ; he does not give the defendant time to state his case ; he sees everything as by a flash of lightning. When the dawn of reason comes, and the cool morning air blows upon him, he finds himself to have been in the wrong. He is sorry ; but it is too late to recall the hasty word or the ill-tempered expression. Slowness, then, to form judgments, especially when our own rights are concerned, is absolutely necessary to the evenness of the temper.

But a good temper is better than an even one. A good temper not only stays execution after the judgment has been declared, and gives time for the preparation of the judgment, but it leans to mercy's side, after the verdict has been given. It may seem to you that I am recommending a namby-pambyism fit only for weak characters. But it is not so. The good-tempered man can be indignant. And the fire of his wrath becomes a thing to be feared ; because men know that it feeds not on passion, but on justice. Justice is not a mere blind, impartial figure weighing evidences in scales. It is a man with a heart filled and surcharged with emotion, and with a hand that wields a two-edged

sword. But justice saves its emotion for worthy purposes. It does not waste moral energy on trifles. Now it is very different with the ill-tempered man. He is like a volcano continually throwing out sparks and fire. Men can never be sure of him. They tremble to approach him; not because their case is bad, or because they deserve blame, but because he is so unreasonable and fitful. He discharges his wrath on trifles—a badly cooked potato, a loose shirt button, an unpunctual servant; and so he has no moral energy left for great occasions.

It is a useful thing to cultivate a happy frame of mind about the details of everyday life. Happiness is made up of trifles, and to take the rough as well as the smooth without complaining is an art worth attaining. I will not presume that you have a positively bad temper. This would make you a social nuisance. Your nearest friends will then have much to put up with, and may well wish you to take a long summer holiday *by yourself*, while they enjoy the quiet of home in your absence. A brawling woman and an ill-tempered man—these seldom appear in the police courts, if they happen to move in good society. But they are, morally speaking, as deserving of as much punishment as the brutal wife-beater. It is not necessary

to proceed to blows in order to be cruel. Many stabs are given by sharp sayings, by words that penetrate into the heart like needles.

What I urge is that you should not be satisfied till you have got a good temper. This is more easily attained than you may imagine. And it is invaluable. The pleasures of its use grow upon its owner. One experience of the employment of the soft answer and the kind word sinks deep into our natures, like a gush of sunshine into a flower-cup. The exercise adds so much to our own joy, as well as to the happiness of others, that we get to love it, as strong men love all healthy exercise. There are in every life a thousand things that call for sweetness of disposition. Unless we can meet these difficulties with an equable temperament, we shall find the mind losing its brightness, and probably the bodily health will relax some of its suppleness and energy. If irritability is the result of carelessness, the *suaviter in modo* is the result of cultivation. Indolence whispers that you can never reach this suavity and sweetness. But you can. Pride asserts that if you reach these virtues, it will be at the expense of your manliness. But it will not. Use every effort to gain this control over your inner self. The school of home duties and of business will give you all the opportunities you

Need to learn such lessons. Let the lessons be thoroughly learned. Go through with the discipline to the bitter end. Conquer angular and crabbed men by conquering yourself. On the lowest ground, namely, that of your own happiness, as well as for the sake of those dear to you, gain the credit of being a good-tempered man. You can only gain this credit by actually possessing a good temper. A good digestion helps our temper considerably. An Englishman is said to be in the best of humours after dinner. Attention to a few of the laws of good health will often drive away distemper. Sleep intensely, rise tolerably early, bathe in cold or cool water every morning, eat only what you can digest, and be as much in the open air as possible. Children are often irritable because they have not enough fresh air. So it is with children of a larger growth.

II. COURTESY.

This should be always on hand in our stock of minor virtues. It is allied to a good temper, but it is somewhat different. A good-tempered man may be discourteous. He may, through the very overflow of his own spirits, forget that all are not in the same happy mood as himself. Temper is a

disposition ; courtesy is an act. The latter is a more superficial virtue than the former. Many an evil-tempered, and even wicked, man is courteous. Any educated person can put on a little temporary politeness and polish when it suits his purpose. What I commend is something deeper than this. It is a habit of considering the wants, the tastes, the feelings, and even the prejudices of others. Strong-minded persons, both male and female, have much need of this virtue. When we are sure of our opinion, it is easy to "put down" some one who differs from us and who has no reasons at hand for his difference. It is at such times very necessary to be courteous in our language, tone, and argument. Conversation finds out the weak places of our dispositions in this respect ; and especially conversation with familiar friends or comrades. The habit of contradiction is not gentlemanly ; but it is practised to a great extent by young men among themselves. We do not advocate a smooth and oily mode of address, but expressions less harsh than "fool" and "ass" are to be found in the English language. If such terms are out of place when young men speak among themselves, they and their like are altogether intolerable when addressed to elders. Few things test a man's real refinement more than his

attitude toward those who belong to the ranks of the people who are "getting old." A rude and blustering mode of address may argue in some only a want of thought, but it generally denotes a "cad." A direct contradiction of our elders is seldom permissible, even when we know that they are wrong. The little words "excuse me," "pardon me," or "I had the idea that the facts were so and so," will generally smooth the way towards the accuracy which you desire.

It would be a good exercise to study the ways and manners of parliamentary speech in order to learn what I will call the grammar of courtesy. Party feeling often runs high; the very object of a debate is to put contradictory views side by side; great interests are often at stake; and yet how seldom are the rules which govern the conduct of gentlemen forgotten. In the first place, as at all meetings, the speeches have to be addressed to the chair. Then no member is actually named. He is designated by the name of his constituency, a practice which is complimentary both to him and to those whom he represents. He is always called "the honourable gentleman." Should any sharp words be used in the heat of debate which the Speaker declares to be unjustifiable, he at once withdraws them. It would be a good thing if we

could exercise a similar control over ourselves, and institute a spirit of courtesy in all our behaviour to those around us. The great thing is for us to cultivate consideration for the feelings of others. This will generally be sufficient to guide us. There are certain bye-laws of conduct which can easily be learned by watching the conduct of well-behaved people. Such, for example, are rules like the one, "Ladies first." Real, genuine, hearty chivalry to the fair sex; this is the first rule of courtesy. When I see a man being helped at table before his wife, I imagine him to be no gentleman. It is not a good sign to see him walking before his wife. Let them take a walk together, *i.e.* side by side. To say "please" when you ask a favour or give a command, and "thank you" when you have a service done you—these appear trifling matters, but they are of the very essence of courtesy. This is especially the case when servants are concerned. Some men growl out their orders as though they were talking to dogs. Kind masters and mistresses make good servants. I might go on endlessly about these little rules of conduct; but a good disposition and constant observation will enable you to make all the rules you need.

III. COMMON SENSE.

This is a quick kind of judgment. There are millions of acts which we have to perform without the help of a slow process of reasoning. To do the right thing at the right time is a great and valuable art; and this art means that we have the power of scizing instinctively all the points in any situation, and of coming to a swift and wise decision. It would be impossible to do the hundred and one things of life unless we had this faculty developed in us more or less, and what I would point out to you is that this faculty is a developed one. When we speak of a man of strong common sense, we mean that he has educated his judgment in the affairs of life until it can be trusted to do the right thing. Originally he may have come from a good stock. His brain may be strong and healthy. His mental plant may have been from the first of a sterling quality; and his parents having been presumably gifted with the same judgment, he had the incestimable advantage of seeing their acts daily, during the most observing years of his life. Yet one point is that his own common sense would never have been remarkable except through the power of culture. So then, if you cannot boast of the same advantages, do not

despair. Common sense is partly a matter of development. It will be worth more than gold to you.

The great thing which you need in its cultivation is attention. A man does foolish things because he does not look all round a proposal. He is taken with the first appearance of a thing, and does not strive to measure its difficulties, or to imagine its results. For example, he sees an advertisement in the paper which promises a young man exactly in his position an income of £400 a year. He is like a fish jumping at a bait. When he has swallowed it, his friends say, "Common sense might have taught him that the advertisement was a swindle." In other words, he did not give sufficient attention to the matter in hand.

We have said that common sense is a swift action of the judgment. But, like all our acquired habits, it began after a very clumsy fashion. Probably any young man seeing the advertisement for the first time, and having no similar experiences, either in his own life or in that of others, to fall back upon, would act unwisely. Common sense would not in his case have seen through such a swindle, and he would have been taken in. Some one has to learn the lesson for society first ;

and then society becomes very wise, and there is a common stock of wisdom, from which any member of society can draw at will. The judgment, however, which to-day acts so swiftly, and as it seems automatically, once moved very slowly. Watch a compositor. You cannot see him pick out the letters one by one, so rapid is his action. But you could have seen the whole process when he began. If you are beginning life there are many things which you had better leave alone, and many other things on which you will have to make up your mind but slowly. You may want to appear smart and quick. You had better be slow and sure. Quickness only comes by practice. What is needed at first and all along, is attention to details before the judgment is formed and before the action is taken.

Observation and intercourse with men of sound judgment, will help us to the possession of this valuable faculty. But these advantages can only benefit us in as far as we use them; that is, we must employ attention as to persons and their habits, as well as to actions and their utility or inutility. A good talk with a wise man, who will answer your questions and meet the difficulties of the supposed cases you place before him, will be of great service to you. Next to this, the reading

of suitable biographies will stimulate the judgment. Choose for this purpose the biographies of those who were in the same line of life as yourself, or who became what you wish to be. Find out the secrets of their success, and apply your second-hand wisdom to your own case, as far as circumstances admit. Few books can teach us common sense better than the lives of successful, or even of disappointed men, especially when they have written these lives themselves.

The sense must be obtained in some way if you are to be a good citizen of the world. So much of your success and happiness depends entirely on yourself, that, if you fail here, you will meet with continual disappointments, and will also inflict much discomfort, if not misery, on others. It is a grand thing to be a captain of a splendid vessel and to be able at a moment's notice to determine her course. It is a grander thing to see your way through the rocks and shoals and sandbanks and fogs of life by the regal gift of common sense.

Keep these three things always on hand : Good Temper, Courtesy, and Common Sense. The greatest of these is the last.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE.

WE may take for granted that you will begin house-keeping for yourself. There is something wrong somewhere when a young man of thirty, who has no relations dependent upon him, cannot afford to get married. There is room enough in the old country for us all, if we only display energy and tact. But if the time ever comes when there is no work for willing workers, it would be well for you to consider the openings which new countries offer. Emigration is a cure for many evils, if only it be undertaken under proper conditions. Incapacity will succeed no better in Australia than here. Idleness will bring a man to poverty in any country. Every information should be gathered from *disinterested* sources before the final plunge is made. The cost should be counted. Not the least part of this cost is the separation from friends and relatives which is involved. If you cannot

face this, be content with a little and remain in the old country. Above all, take a sober view of the prospects which emigration offers. Do not be deluded by grand advertisements. Do not suppose that you will make a rapid fortune, or, in fact, that you will make a fortune at all. Many have been bitterly disappointed, and have had reason to lament the change which they made. Remember that there are always speculators ready to ease you of your savings with large promises. They will deal liberally with you in words, if only you will entrust them with your coin. A determination to work *with your hands* in this, or in any country to which you may go, is your only security against failure and poverty. An Englishman's castle is one that is built by the Englishman himself.

Ownership and privacy are essential to the comfort and happiness of home. Do not set up house till you can afford to occupy the whole of it. It is an uncomfortable thing for a young married couple to be in furnished* or unfurnished apartments. They are never really alone; they have to share the joys and cares of housekeeping with others; and a thousand little annoyances often arise on both sides. Here then we see the need of thrift. Many make a great mistake because they begin by taking a house larger than

they can afford. So they have to take in a lodger to eke out their income. It would have been far better if they had begun life in a smaller house, which they could have had all to themselves. They would then, from the very beginning, have had a sense of ownership and of comfort.

It is a good thing, too, to try and buy the house which you occupy. I write here for those of slender means. I know little or nothing about good and bad investments, except what the newspapers tell everybody. But I see clearly that many young men have learned to save a part of their earnings by trying to purchase a small bit of house property. For this purpose, few better things could be used than a sound building society. A sound one! Some of these societies indulge in reckless speculation, or in unjustifiable extravagance. The day of reckoning arrives, and they come to grief. A little careful inquiry will generally enable the cautious to avoid these. But when all is said, there will remain a goodly number of such societies in which it will be both safe and profitable to invest. Such companies enable the young man to put aside what he would pay in rent in the form of savings; and in the course of a few years the house, which in the meanwhile the society holds as security, will be handed over to him. Many persons

think that it is better to rent a house, and that there is more freedom of removal under such circumstances. If you adopt this view, it would, however, be well to save the sum necessary to purchase your house. You would then be in the position of one who owns his own house.

Supposing this practical point to be settled to your satisfaction, you can set about making your house into a castle. It will be a place to which you can safely retire from the work of life, and from which you can sally forth every morning to renew the combat. The choice of a house should be regulated by your employment, and by what you propose to do with your leisure hours. It should be situated at a moderate distance from your work, and in cases where conveyance to and from your work is necessary, the cost should be added to your rent. A cheap house in the suburbs becomes sometimes a very dear one, when railway fares are added. Many young men, who have no particular love for gardening, cut themselves off entirely from the stirring intellectual and political life of towns, to say nothing of religious enterprise, by settling down in some distant quarter of semi-gentility. The flow of the population away from the centres of town and city is inevitable; but you should look all round your life and its possibilities before you

altogether forsake the teeming millions or thousands amongst whom you earn your daily bread. Remember that you have only a certain number of hours at your disposal every day. Try and make the best of them. Do not waste too much time by rail. A moderate and brisk walk is good for mind and body, especially if your habits are sedentary. The garden looks beautiful in summer? Yes, but the winter months in England are long and dismal. So, even if your means allow, do not in youth live too far from your work. Far enough for rest and recreation, but not so far as to make you a social or political hermit.

It is very difficult to avoid appearing trivial in giving advice about the appointments of your house, yet some of the happiness of life, and much of its comfort, depends on the way in which the home is kept together. Go into two cottages, and what a vast difference exists between them. Both belong, it may be, to labouring men; and these labourers receive the same amount of wages. All is neatness and beauty in the one, while all is dirt and disorder in the other. The difference lies in the way in which the house is managed.

At the very commencement it would be a good thing to remember that dear furniture is often the cheapest. A good solid table or chair lasts

almost a lifetime. The venerated and brittle goods which are so often advertised do not retain their brightness much beyond the honeymoon. Things should be serviceable. They will not break so easily, and when broken, they are more easily mended. Mend things at once. A stitch in the curtains in time saves nine. A hole in the wall stopped up at once prevents an ugly rent. These little repairs can often be done by your own hands. It saves money, and is besides a kind of recreation to do the little odd jobs that are always turning up. A room papered by your own skill gives you perpetual delight. A man loves his horse all the more if he grooms it himself. And so it is with a house. This is especially so if you have any artistic taste. The panels of the doors and the walls of the passages might be decorated according to your own designs. Artists sometimes display at the same time their love of home and love of beauty by the adornments of their houses. If you cannot soar so high as this, there are many methods by which you can still make your home pleasing to the eye. Woman's taste and knack are invaluable. A few contrivances light up a room wonderfully, and the daily duster helps to maintain the brightness. I have known a common bench to be made fit for any drawing-room by the addition of a few

cushions and a cloth of Turkey red. Plaited straw makes a good picture frame for small photographs. Flowers are graceful everywhere. Who can arrange them so tenderly as your wife? A back yard will afford room for a greenhouse, and a pipe from the kitchen boiler will keep the plants alive during the winter months. Fresh flowers, however, are always to be had in the markets during the season, and they are a constant source of delight.

That the house should be clean goes without the saying. There can be no joy in living in a dirty, undusted room. Regular mornings should be set apart for this purpose, and the cleaning should be well over before callers are likely to come. A little cleaning every day is better than a tremendous upset every week. Great are the glories of soap; but it must be used judiciously. Let not the wives drive their husbands from home by a constant flood of water and the perpetual swish of the scrubbing-brush. Even in the days of Noah there was an ark. So, when the waters are let loose, provide one room where you can sit in dry comfort.

As to ornament, we have only to add a few words on books, pictures, and music. Every home should possess some musical instrument. If you cannot play yourself, a friend will drop in occasionally who can, and you will at least be able to

appreciate and enjoy his performance. But why not try to gain a proficiency in this direction? There are instruments to suit all tastes and occasions—the trumpet for the soldier, the harp or the piano for domestic song, the flute for the lover, the organ or harmonium for the worshipper, and the violin to touch some of the highest notes of the soul.

Paintings are expensive. Perhaps you may not be able to afford to purchase works in oil and water-colours. If you are, aim at excellence, and exercise your own choice. Some seem to buy by the yard, or to leave their judgment in the hands of a picture dealer. It is better to be indebted to your own taste in these matters than to pay Mr. A. or Mr. B. for his judgment. You may make mistakes, but you will profit by these errors far more than by falling down before an infallible pope of art. But if paintings be beyond your means, I would suggest engravings as the next best things with which to adorn your walls. A good painting is multiplied in this way, and you may have the pleasure of looking at its form in your own house, even if you miss its colour. Only let there be life in what you put on your walls. Nature, or human nature, should be in the engraving, or else it will become like Gorgon's head,

tending to turn you to stone as you look upon it. How wearisome some walls are!—the same solid and dead bit of architecture staring out at you from morning to night. There must be a suggestion of life and change about your engraving. A cathedral by itself will pall on you ; but if there be clouds flying over it, or peasants passing into it, or the evening splendours of the sun reflected from it, the picture will always have a new meaning to you. Chaucer's "Pilgrims at the Tabard Inn" will give you endless amusement ; but a lady working in an elegantly furnished room at a sewing machine is a most distressing picture. You will ache all over at the sight, and be constantly wishing to turn her pretty face to the wall.

I shall have more to say in another part of this volume about books, so here I will only call your attention to the need of their presence in every Englishman's castle. They are amongst the best fortifications which we could erect against care. Let them be well selected. Don't buy rubbish. Novels^s with paper backs are not nice to look at. Begin well. Select a few good standard volumes of history, or science, or poetry. Then cherish such respect for them as never to add an unworthy companion to their number. Keep on adding to your stock. Let literature

be a department of your expenditure. Put books in your annual budget. They will be a part of your wealth, in more ways than one. As far as possible read them together with your wife. Let her share your intellectual pursuits. Talk to her about your books till she is thoroughly roused and interested. Be fellow-students.

ON THE DANGERS OF GADDING
ABOUT.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE DANGERS OF GADDING ABOUT

I WISH to give this term a somewhat wider application than usual. There are peculiar temptations in the way of those who have no fixed social centre, to which some reference ought to be made. Young men in lodgings, young women in houses of business, commercial travellers, loungers at club-houses and reading-rooms, and young men at our universities—all these need to exercise special watchfulness over themselves. They are removed from the restraints and joys of home-life. There is, as it were, an unnatural separation of the sexes. Men and women exercise powerful influences of action and reaction upon one another. Hence nature ordains the relationships of brother and sister, and of dearer ties still. It is a loss to any man to be long shut out of the society of good women. And the converse also holds good. Men gain sweetness and women gain strength by

mutual association. A mother's love is a tower of strength to a young man, till he finds some one nearer and dearer still. A father or a brother is an inspiration to a young woman, till, in the exercise of her solemn choice, she leans on the arm of her beloved.

But there are transition periods, and absences from home which are full of danger to the character. Of some of these we can only speak in the most guarded language. To the unprotected and solitary of both sexes we say, Beware of bad men and of bad women. They lie in wait to deceive and to destroy at every turn of your path. They exist in great numbers in the midst of every town; and, indeed, no village is perhaps entirely free from them. But to dwellers in cities we give the one word which is enough for the wise—*Beware!*

It is to the deterioration of the finer instincts and higher faculties of the nature that I wish to call your attention when I refer to the dangers of gadding about. We know how easy it is to fritter away time. By aimless, listless habits we lose hours, days, weeks. Just in the same way do we lose power in its best sense by wandering ways. Every man needs ballast. He needs a central weight and momentum in all his capacities. If

he is continually shifting his cargo, he is in constant danger of capsizing. Force of character is a growth. It is the accretion of many years. If we start from home with pure affections, we must see to it that, when far from home, those affections are strengthened. A letter regularly written will not only gladden "the folks at home," but will add considerably to the force of our affectional nature. In short, concentration is necessary to social happiness and success; and dispersion, on the other hand, and dissipation will lead to weakness and misery.

We take the lowest ground when we say that no man succeeds who does not act on a given plan. Much precious life-force is wasted by want of knowing what to do next. The number of unsettled people in the world is somewhat alarming. The feeling of home is rapidly passing away from our large towns, for people are constantly "flitting." Young men fail to secure success in business because they change their situations for the mere sake of change. Many are always on the eve of emigration. If they get to the New World they do not settle. It is still a life of gadding about. I have met with men who have tried their hands at almost everything, from gold digging in Australia to the working of some new

patent, and, though they have respectable ability, they have failed. If some have too many irons in the fire, others pull out their irons before they are hot. There is much wisdom in the homely proverb, "Let the cobbler stick to his last."

The love of novelty is always a great temptation amid a high-pressure civilization like our own. Freshness may be obtained without resorting to morbid habits of curiosity. The deft fingers of a clever woman will alter last year's bonnet so that it shall in real beauty far outshine the newest fashions. Life is really like a kaleidoscope ; it only needs that we shift the ordinary circumstances which surround us, in some minor points, and we shall gain all the refreshment that our jaded nerves require. The fields and foliage outside the town in which we live are as green as those of Windermere, and the early snow on the housetops is as white as that which glistens on Mont Blanc. A little change may be obtained on very easy terms, if we would repress our over-restless desires. If the saying be true that

"Straight is the line of duty,
Curved is the line of beauty,"

there is no reason why we should not now and again introduce a loop-line in the ordinary track of

our life. But let us beware of wild wanderings and zigzags that lead nowhere.

The commercial traveller is in special danger from unsettled modes of life. He is not, indeed, under the disadvantage of having no calling. This is fixed, and his movements are regulated by the exigencies of business. Yet he is removed in a large measure from the attachments of home. His evening hours after his accounts have been made up have to be spent among comparative strangers. He is tempted to become a frequenter of the theatre, or of low music halls. He may sit up all night playing at cards or billiards. He finds a rest to his brain in some sensational tale. He has to pick up political intelligence in railway carriages. Such men cannot be too watchful about themselves. They will, in the absence of such care, easily slip into aimless moral habits. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed. A genuine purpose to lead a blameless life, the effort to seize all opportunities of doing good, care in the formation of friendships, and caution in reference to casual acquaintances, with a prayerful determination to improve the mind and heart—these will be great safeguards amid great dangers.

The uncommercial traveller is under no less obligation to self-watchfulness. He forms quite a

distinct species of the human race. We meet him at continental hotels and at all places where health is sought. He is a loungeur by trade. He is not out of health, but he is constantly needing a change. With what a tongue does he rattle off the names of all the chief watering-places in Europe ! With what an eye does he look at his uplifted wine-glass, as though he had ransacked all lands, and, alas ! in vain, to find good liquor ! With what whispered confidences does he relate the charges, high or low, which he has paid in various inns and *pensions* ! Such people, always on the move, lose, or are in danger of losing, moral earnestness. They become men of "society," dashing but not deep, superficial and knowing, but not intelligent.

The flirt is a common and a most objectionable species of human nature. Flirts take lodgings in human hearts, and run away without due notice and without paying the rent. The word is usually applied to meaningless dangleings after the opposite sex. It might be used in reference to all fickleness of the affections, and to all mere hypocrisies of friendship. Some very bad things are done under cover of the phrase, "I did not mean anything." The wrong consists in the fact that nothing was meant when something was suggested. Let a man or a woman say at the outset that nothing is meant,

and the illusion is at once detected. Flirtation is lying. If falsehood is good for the character, so too is flirtation.

There are some forms of scepticism which are nothing better than types of gadding about. I do not now speak of serious doubt, which cuts the heart like cold steel. But there are many young men who dabble in doubts, much as children paddle at the seaside. They fancy that they know all about the sea of truth. They have measured and fathomed it. They are "superior" young men, whose excellency consists in denying everything but ungodliness and worldly lusts. The only ground for their scepticism is to be found in a smattering of a few books or magazine articles. They have never worked for truth ; they have not bought wisdom with the sweat of their brow. If ever they have visited the city of sound doctrine, it has only been as tramps who have been lodged in the casual ward. What can they know ?

In all gadding about there is loss of force. This is the great injury. The wear and tear of life in a healthy man is constantly followed by a recruiting process. But if we spend strength on mere nothings, the labour ends in itself, and leaves mind and heart exhausted. It is not merely what we leave undone which involves loss, but it is what we

cease to be and fail to become. The inward soul, with all its finely attuned instincts and faculties, receives irreparable damage. We see the outward effects in an ill-regulated temper, a ceaseless tongue, a deranged and disorderly home, an unquiet demeanour. But the most serious results are unseen. Even clockwork will not bear too much shaking and carriage; how much less will the delicate mechanism of man's nature! The will becomes loose, the conscience is an alarum bell that strikes at the wrong hour, the wheels of affection move stiffly, the mind loses its clear bell-like tone, when the man indulges in the evil habit of gadding about.

THE UNRULY MEMBER CALLED
TO ORDER.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNRULY MEMBER CALLED TO ORDER.

THE Apostle who called the tongue an unruly member must have had considerable experience with both men and women. It is not easy to hit upon a good epithet. We feel that he has succeeded in making the cap fit. You have in the assemblage of your faculties an unruly member, and it is probably the tongue. As chairman of that assemblage you have to keep order. Unless you do this, there will be many "scenes" and unseemly disturbances in your life. It will be necessary for you to keep your eye constantly fixed on this sense. However quiet and orderly it may appear at any given moment, it is liable to very sudden and unexpected outbursts. The best safeguard is to give it a good education.

The first thing of importance is to teach the tongue to tell the truth. This is felt by all commercial men. Business would be at a standstill if the words

which are spoken were not to be believed. It requires much longer time to buy in Italy than in England, because in the former country sellers always ask more than the proper price of the article. Knowledge, information, and social happiness spread but slowly when the credit attaching to language is not good. It is not an uncommon thing for persons to glide into the habit of colouring all their statements. They never tell downright lies, but they seldom speak the simple truth. It seems as though they could not give a correct account of anything they see or hear. They are always, according to their own account, hearing of some extraordinary event, but on inquiry the event turns out never to have happened. They keep the ball of ill news or of slander rolling. Everything which passes through their mind and mouth gains immensely in magnitude. They take a positive delight in retailing gossip in such a fashion that it shall give rise to the greatest possible astonishment. They seem to feed on sensationalism. They are wonder-mongers.

Others, again, pass over that subtle and indefinable line which separates humour from untruth. There is a kind of humour which has been made very popular by such American writers as Artemus Ward, Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Russell

Lowell, some of which consists in the very absurdity of the misstatements. It is very droll and irresistible. But when this is indulged in by jocular young men and fast young ladies without respect to subject and seasons, it verges on the domain of untruth. Humour is a great blessing ; it is the mustard and salt of conversation. But there are some who seldom take mustard with anything, and who, through some organic defect, have but a dull sense of humour. In converse with such it is highly necessary to be chary in the exercise of this faculty. Wit can be more widely and instantaneously understood. It is a flash of lightning. But humour is like soft sunlight shining through a shower, and many see the shower without perceiving the light. On many grounds, therefore, young men especially have to be on their guard against a too free and perilous use of exaggerated language, even by way of making fun.

But there is no need of subtle definitions and warnings on a plain subject of this kind. Strict adherence to the truth is what we can all at least understand, and it is what we ought all to practise. The current coin must not be clipped and debased to suit private ends. Some save all their battered money for church collections ; and so some are sincere enough in the market, but only half in

earnest when they congregate in the sanctuary. Were we carefully to examine the hymns which we sing, and the creeds which we utter, our worship would be worthier of our better selves, and our religion would be cleared of much cant.

This is, perhaps, the best place to say a word about singing. No instrument is so fitted to express music as the human voice. A voice that sings well, or even decently well, is a pleasure to the possessor and a great aid to social happiness. Each voice has its own *timbre*, and is fitted by nature to take its own proper "part." The neglect of singing-culture accounts in some small measure, perhaps, for the phlegmatic and cautious nature of Englishmen. There are exceptions. The heartiness of Yorkshiremen finds its vent through the voice and through varied instruments. The Latin races are perhaps more songful than the Saxon. They live for the most part under summer skies. Amid the rains which sweep over our little island we could often turn the gloom into gladness by a little more social singing. But the simplest glees and madrigals, to say nothing of severer forms of part music, cannot be executed without some training. Our voices need to be taken in hand early. A few singing lessons in youth would mean much social joy in future years. Ear and eye and voice

need to be brought into requisition for this purpose. And so also does the tongue. Much of the power of the great singers arises from their clear articulation of words. The sense is given as well as the sound. It is ludicrous to hear the conventional "Thank you," "thank you" chiming round the drawing-room after the young lady has sung nobody knows what. She left off on a high, staccato note, and that was quite enough to bring down the drawing-room, or to stop the conversation, if any were so rude as to be engaged in any under-voiced talk. Much more attention is being given to this subject in our elementary schools, and it is to be hoped that a common-sense reform will spread upwards in this matter.

But to return to more prosaic matters. To keep the unruly member in order, the tongue should know what to say. The art of conversation diffuses more information and joy (and sometimes grief and pain) than many of the other arts put together. Many young people are painfully shy in company. This is often a great misfortune, but it is one which may be cured by diligent watchfulness. It is cowardly to withdraw from company because we are nervous, or because we know that we shall never "shine."

Few things in life are more enjoyable than a

good conversation. The art is therefore worthy of much cultivation. The first thing is to have something to say. A well-informed mind is absolutely necessary to good conversational powers. Besides this, there must be quick observation of life, a flavour of humour, and, above all, good temper. To talk with an ill-tempered man is like contending with an east wind. Many people get hot in the face and hot in the mind when they begin to converse. We must have our dispositions and passions well under control in all private intercourse. Blasts of steam are somewhat inappropriate round a friendly table. A thumping fist, a raised and thunderous voice, a flat denial, vehement assertions—these are eminently out of place. A talk should be a placid stream, with a rippled surface of life, and here and there the friendly splash of an angler's fly. It is a moot point as to whether punning is allowable in conversation. If the talk turns on serious subjects, and unless it does this it can hardly be profitable, puns are an immense hindrance. They are like turning the points the wrong way when an express train is running. Sometimes, however, a pleasant half-hour is spent in banter and merriment; and on such occasions the punster is not unwelcome. But punning is not conversation. It may sometimes, though not often,

act as the crack of the coachman's whip to the horses. For the most part it performs the function of the break, and even tends to upset the coach.

Most people love gossip rather than worthy and improving converse. It is easier. Tit-bits and fragments about the outside of things are more palatable than a common concern about some type of truth. The only way to avoid this frittering away of time and mental strength is to cultivate something better with our nearest friends. Our meal-times might all be seasoned with wholesome words. Each dinner might be a kind of mental symposium. The simpler meals are often better adapted for this exercise than an elaborately prepared dinner-party. At our own table we know our company. There is more freedom, and we can therefore the more readily get at the heart of things. It is to be feared that many waste much precious time in discussing, or perhaps complaining about, the victuals put before them, when they might be referring to subjects of lasting interest. Young men might well make political, literary, scientific, and ecclesiastical things the subjects of more frequent talk. It would impress what they have read or learned more clearly on their own minds, and would also tend to enliven the family proceedings. Home will be a dull place unless we

daily bring fresh life and interest into it. If the art of conversation is to be duly exercised, young men and women must exert their faculties both to get and to communicate knowledge.

"Gentle" reader, you need no warning against harsh and malicious speech. If, however, you should lend this book to a gruff and rasping reader, then plead with him to lay aside his bottle of acid, and to substitute for it a cruse of sweet oil. The men and women of rancorous tongues are great enemies of social happiness. What shall we say of clattering tongues, of whisperers, of gossips, of the retailers and wholesalers of old wives' fables, of backbiters and heart-stingers, of the social vitriol-dropper, of the scold, and of the whimperer? May a dumb demon possess them; or, if this is impossible, may a deaf one possess us when they are near!

The art of public speaking, at least on a small scale, should be attained by most young men of intelligence. This is an art lamentably neglected in English life. It has been kept alive mainly by religious societies. Apart from these, there are too few opportunities for addressing small audiences. A very small proportion of our young men go to the universities, and of these few engage in the "Union" debates. Consequently many of our

members of Parliament cannot make a decent speech. And if we take any ordinary gathering, and exclude professional speakers, we shall find that the average type of speaking is very low. Confusion of ideas, chaos in words and sentences, nervousness painful to all parties concerned, and at best a lack of dignity, finish, and fire—these are conspicuous deficiencies in English public speaking. Where lies the remedy? Our young men must begin to speak early. They should choose some debating society of modest dimensions and pretensions in which to try their first flights. Preparation for every speech, however short, will be necessary, especially as far as the arrangement of the ideas is concerned. The subjects should at first be familiar, and the audience such that it does not take away all one's courage. It is not my purpose to give hints as to the art of public speaking. These may be found set forth in many able and valuable treatises. I wish to urge you to give this subject early attention; for, if you hold any position of responsibility, you will find that facility in expressing yourself before an audience will add much to your commercial value, to your political influence, and therefore to your usefulness.

**“MANNERS MAKE THE
GENTLEMAN.”**

CHAPTER X.

“MANNERS MAKE THE GENTLEMAN.”

THIS proverb is only a half truth. By manners, or *mores*, the Romans meant social customs. These might be wholesome or the reverse ; but the duty of the Roman gentleman was to conform to them. It was the custom to go to the gladiatorial shows, and much as Cicero despised these and ridiculed them, he felt it necessary to be present at them, otherwise he might have forfeited the name of a Roman gentleman. Our own social customs are impregnated with Christian sentiment. We have indeed a mixture of pagan^{ism} superstition and of Epicurean folly. But a young man might do worse than take the habits of “good society” as the rules of his social conduct. There are times when it is our duty to set our faces against the usages of society ; but, for the most part, society has purely to do with what is superficial and circumstantial, and it may

therefore be trusted to give us the cue. Where things are trivial and unimportant in themselves, it is the right rule to obey the dicta of society. It may seem absurd to wear a dress-coat and white tie in order to appear at a dinner-party, but such customs are honoured by obedience to them. Amongst intimate friends many of these little formalities are easily dispensed with. But, for the most part, we need some outward formalism in order to express the inward deference of the mind toward our equals. There are very few who are strong enough to dispense with the ritualism of common life.

Instead of the proverb at the head of this chapter, it would be nearer the truth to say that the gentleman makes the manners. If you examine a solid piece of English oak, you will find that it will bear a polish wherever you may cut it. Manners are often something stuck on like veneer; and if you cut through the man by some unexpected circumstance, you will find a very coarse grain. Good manners should be the expression of intrinsic goodness. Courtesy is the secular side of Christian love. It is the bearing of a man in the world, just as Christian love is his attitude in the spiritual sphere. Looked at, then, from the secular side, we should say that a gentleman was one who showed

constant consideration for the feelings of others. And this consideration is shown for the sake of others, and not for his own. Some find that they can serve their own ends best by a kindly tone, and so they adopt it. The spurious courtesy can generally be distinguished from the genuine. The parasite and the sycophant burn incense at their own shrine. Many young men who dawdle about drawing-rooms and dangle after their young lady friends are only self-admirers. They are at length found out, and their flattery becomes loathsome to all who are gifted with common sense. Selfishness and good manners will not coalesce. A man must *be* a gentleman before he can act like one.

Thackeray has done good service in writing down the snobs of society. In fact, the fine airs which strut through the thoroughfares of life can only be "taken off" by the use of the satire of which he was such a master. He has taken the gilt off the gingerbread very thoroughly. Yet somehow it reappears again; and every man with a velvet collar to his great-coat, and with "unmentionables" of perfect fit, still deems himself a gentleman. When will the world learn that clothes do not make the man, nor manners the gentleman? Not till all men are what they pretend to be. Meanwhile we may learn from a novelist that a well-dressed

man is not necessarily a gentleman ; and that fine clothes and fine manners may be stuck on to very indifferent, not to say "snobbish," characters.

Yet because I hope that my reader is a gentleman or a lady (for what author does not hope this of his readers?), I would counsel a little attention to manners. I have never consulted a book of etiquette, but I would rather do this than offend by ignorance the tastes of the cultivated. If our instincts and purposes are correct we need no such stereotyped directions. It is a good thing to go into the society of those who are better, not necessarily better off, than ourselves. The atmosphere of educated persons is an education in itself. The company of the coarse and vulgar must deteriorate the finest disposition and blunt the most delicate instincts. We cannot expect to have a good tone unless we choose well and carefully those to whom we pour out the cogitations of our minds. Every class of society affords a fair and ample field for selection. We need never be at a loss for good company.

Good manners are made up of a number of attentions to small things. Some make themselves offensive by forgetting this ; and yet we cannot say that they are lacking in true instincts. It is a pity, therefore, that they are not more careful. If they

would be circumspect, *i.e.* if they would look round, they would soon learn the habits of gentlemen. They would not indulge in habits or language offensive to ladies, through lack of thoughtfulness. They would finish their toilet in their sleeping apartments, and never be found putting the last touches in company. The due use of the looking-glass would save much social uneasiness. The Pharisees might be imitated with advantage in one particular; for they washed their hands oft. A gentleman appears clean to the finger-tips at the first meal of the day. A lady, be she ever so menial in her duties, performs her ablutions on her own person before undertaking to dust the rooms. The dirty house might well object to be cleansed by a dirty person. In short, cleanliness is the very first duty laid on those who would abstain from offending the feelings of others. This is especially necessary at meal-times. To eat with unwashed hands and untidy person is to sink to the level of the brutes. Eating and drinking need to be redeemed from grossness by refinements of cleanness and neatness, and, if possible, of flowers and cheerful conversation. To gobble up one's food reminds one of an animal which I need not mention. To put a knife to the mouth, to make unpleasant noises with the lips and teeth, to sprawl over the table

with arms and elbows, to be regardless of the wants of others, and not to pass the salt in the nick of time—these certainly are misdemeanours of which some good men have been known to be guilty. Their usefulness and influence were not increased by such conduct.

The glory of a woman is in her hair. But she ought to take prompt and proper pains, so that the glory may be recognized *early*. Why should dressing the hair be postponed till the afternoon, under the plea that housework must be done with the head unkempt? You would forgive a housemaid her dirty hands if she had her hair neatly done early in the morning. The head and hands will often reveal the true gentleman or lady. Let us take care that they do not offend others.

Oddities and peculiarities of behaviour should be avoided. These things are remembered against us by society. Who does not call to mind the young lady who could not leave off biting her finger-nails, or another who put out her tongue in threading her needle; or the young man who could not speak a sentence without twitching his shirt-collar, or another who was continually diving into his pockets for thoughts, but in reality for pence to jingle; or of the lady who twirled her thumbs, or of

the other who washed her hands with invisible soap while talking? A little care would soon cure such persons of these disagreeable peculiarities.

Some seem to suffer from a constitutional shyness, which leads to much awkwardness of manner. We do not say that awkwardness is the sign of ungentlemanly behaviour. Some of the finest characters have been very awkward and reserved, especially in mixed society. It is sometimes a peculiarity of studious men that they are very absent-minded. The stories told of the late Dr. Duncan, of Edinburgh, are very amusing. When, on one occasion, in dressing for dinner he made a mistake and went to bed, he provoked much laughter. Yet such mistakes involve much inconvenience, and they had therefore better be avoided. Self-watchfulness is not, perhaps, the best cure in such cases. Self-forgetfulness, absorption in the convenience of other people, and a consequent unconsciousness of one's own defects, would very often lead on to agreeable ways in society.

Good manners are the small coin of social life. We may get well through the world with the gold and notes of sterling moral and spiritual qualities, but we should do better if we carried some small change always about with us. Children are taught

to say "please" when they ask for favours. This is the key-note of good behaviour. To have learned this simple lesson well is to have made a good and never-to-be-forgotten start in the art of good social behaviour.

A SLAVE OF HABIT.

CHAPTER XI.

A SLAVE OF HABIT.

I PROPOSE to speak in this chapter of a few bad habits. They are, however, only specimens of many others which need not be mentioned. If you wish to know whether you are indulging in bad habits, ask yourself whether you are a slave or a master. Making the best of life, would you deliberately choose to pursue your present course, or would you rather give it up and begin another? I have known many people say that they are quite indifferent as to little indulgences, when I could see perfectly well that they could not do without them. A man will tell you, between the whiffs of his pipe, that he could easily give up smoking. Let him try it. He does not know whether he can or not till he has abstained for many months, and even then, if his abstinence has cost him much pain, the suffering is an evidence that he had become a slave. With regard to good habits, a man would not

deliberately choose to give them up ; he deliberately elects, with a view to his own highest progress, to go on with them. His choice is free, because it moves in the upward direction. And the man who does what he wills when that will is absolutely right, is a free man. He is master of himself, and no slave. Test yourself, and see whether you are a master or a slave.

Many of the worst habits arise from the lower appetites of our nature. Gluttony is one of these. There are more gluttons than is commonly supposed. It is a habit which is not associated with any special disgrace, and men therefore indulge themselves with impunity. The brain loses its clearness, the eye its brightness, the frame its elasticity, and the soul its freedom through this evil habit. It is the special weakness of men as distinguished from women. Men have stronger appetites ; they need more food ; they sit down more hungry to the table than their wives and sisters. Gluttony consists in taking more in quantity and variety than is good for the frame. It may also run into expensiveness in the style of living. But in itself it is strictly personal and animal. Two people may partake of the same meal, and one be abstemious and the other self-indulgent. It is a disgusting thing to hear people

talking throughout the meal of the food and drink which is before them. I remember meeting a French lady in Italy at a *table d'hôte*, who conversed for nearly an hour most eloquently on the various wines which she liked. She was very fat and very offensive.

It is a common proverb that every man is either a fool or a physician at forty. Every man gets gradually to know what food is best for his own constitution. A little knowledge of the laws of physiology is very desirable, to which may be added some information as to the chemistry of food. Any man who would persistently overload his stomach with that which he cannot digest, or with that which when digested does not repair his wasted tissue, is certainly not a physician. He is either a fool or a glutton. Bad habits of this kind have very far-reaching results. Dyspeptic people make very poor types of religion. An ill digestion often sours the temper, clouds the mind, and makes a man a nuisance to his dearest friends. A return to simple food and simple habits of feeding would go far to cure many diseases, and to settle many angry controversies. After all, the glutton has less enjoyment in eating than the man who keeps a watch over palate and hunger. A lunch of bread-and-cheese and milk in some Swiss chalet, or a

breakfast of oatmeal porridge in a Scotch farmhouse—who that has known these pleasures would compare them for a moment with the long and dreary *menu* of a Lord Mayor's feast? It is not what we eat that gives strength, but what we digest. Our meals should be our obedient servants.

Intemperance in drinking is a bad habit. It is one of the worst demons with which we have to deal. It destroys lives, blasts happiness, brings ruin to homes, and produces an amount of misery in this country which no figures could set forth. Some people seem to think that intemperance is synonymous with drunkenness. But this is by no means the case. There are thousands who have never been drunk, who have nevertheless been intemperate nearly all their lives. Alcohol is a poison, and men may get accustomed to an overdose, just as they may to one of laudanum or chlorodyne. If the daily dose tends to blunt or destroy the fine tissue of the brain; if it brutalizes or deadens the nervous system; if it hinders the quick and ready discharge of duty—it is intemperance. Daily dram-drinking is often more injurious than an occasional outburst of drunkenness. Both are wicked; but the former will more certainly tell on the physical constitution than the latter. The young man who is dependent on a morning glass

of beer or sherry to keep him going is in a dangerous physical and moral condition. The lady who finds herself insensibly led on to take more than a very small quantity of alcoholic liquor at her meals is on the slope leading to a precipice. There is much drinking that passes muster in society which is only intemperance under a thin disguise. The warnings against drunkenness are loud and clear, but those against these habits, which directly lead to all the worst consequences of drunkenness, are often concealed from the unwary.

What we recommend especially and unreservedly to the young, is total abstinence. On moral grounds we need a remedy which shall be radical and thorough. An extreme disease calls for an extreme medicine. On physiological grounds it is generally agreed that a healthy and growing constitution needs no stimulus like that of alcohol. Doctors disagree on this point, but not very materially. The weight of opinion and consensus of advice point most unmistakably in the direction at least of the most rigid moderation, and generally of strict abstinence. That men cannot work unless they have their daily glass of beer or wine is a notion which is shown to be false by a thousand instances. Some of the world's hardest workers are and have been abstainers, and nearly all have

been remarkable for habits of moderation. We do not argue that this beverage is sinful. We are merely giving honestly the best advice we can to those anxious to escape the perils of a bad habit. You will be better in health, in purse, in service to man, and in position—if, at least, you begin life as an abstainer. It is shameful for a healthy young man to be a slave to a glass of beer. It is still more shameful for an able-bodied young woman to be dependent on stimulus of this sort.

Youthful smoking is another bad habit. There are few habits to which men become greater slaves than that of smoking. It is very rare to meet with any one who has broken away from it. I am not seeking to lay down a hard and fast line in this or in any other matter where the wrong consists not in use but in abuse. If strong drinks were not abused there would be no need of abstinence. So of tobacco. I will leave others to sing of the pleasures of the weed, without being unmindful of this side. I wish to point out its perils. Youthful smoking is on the increase. Boys are seen on every side struggling with their first cigar. They evidently find it difficult to learn the habit of smoking ; but, once learned, it is seldom unlearned. Our objections to the habit are that in youth it is positively injurious to health ; that it often in-

volves an unjustifiable expense, both of time and money; that it sometimes leads to bad or undesirable company; that it involves the smoker in some other evil customs; and that it is offensive to those who do not smoke. Where none of these conditions are involved, it is not pleasant to feel bound and enslaved by such an appetite. We may rightly hold that the use of tobacco is a lawful and pleasant indulgence. But even then a "gentleman" considers the propriety of place and time, and, out of consideration for others, he often feels called upon to forego what is pleasant to himself. I have no wish to erect abstention either from drink or tobacco into one of the cardinal virtues; but the elements of conduct are so dovetailed into one another, that what is in itself trivial may involve issues of the utmost importance. No one has ever been ruined by abstinence, but thousands have been by means of these apparently harmless indulgences. Heroics may be out of place on such subjects as these, but safety and success in life make an appeal to which the most prosaic ought to listen.

Gambling is a very bad habit. Men get dissatisfied with the dull routine of business. They want a new sensation, or they desire to obtain some startling bit of fortune. Gambling ministers

most assuredly to this morbid craving. Billiard tables are frequented not always for the sake of the game itself, which is of a manly, skilful, and interesting kind, but for the sake of the gambling which goes on round them. Men are inflamed by drink and hazard, and lose their heads. Commercial travellers and other young men at large sit up half the night over cards. They unfit themselves for steady, sober business, and not unfrequently use money which is not their own. Religious people lend themselves to this abominable vice by their conduct at bazaars, where the payment of half-a-crown will sometimes make the gambler a possessor of "a white elephant" If a sofa cushion may be raffled for, why not a five-pound note? If a pony and carriage, why not a bag of sovereigns? It is a sorry thing to see Christian mothers and sisters inveigling young men to pious gambling. They little know what goes on in billiard-rooms, in bar parlours, at club card-tables, in offices and houses of business, as the Derby day or the 'Varsity boat race draws near. Why should an honourable man receive a single shilling from a comparative stranger unless he has earned it by service rendered or value given? This is what the gambler does amid the flutterings of a bazaar or the close atmosphere of the gambling

"hell." Don't walk home with another man's sovereign in your pocket, even though he is polite enough to say that it is fairly yours. There is something degrading in receiving money from another which is neither a gift nor a price. Gambling often becomes a virulent fever ; it rages, and burns and consumes the man. If you would continue healthy and masterful, beware of becoming a slave to this mean and degrading habit.

The above are specimens of habits to which you may, unless you exercise caution, become a slave. They are types of a large class. They are not the worst, though they are bad enough. There are "fleshly lusts which war against the soul," secret vices, evil companionships, of which we must not speak. One hint will be enough. Impurity is a demon from hell. How many, alas ! have fallen into its meshes. *Beware of the first beginnings of this sin.*

Do not be a slave to any habit. Be the master of your methods of life, not their servant. It is a miserable thing to lose one's freedom. Have you ever watched a fly caught in a spider's web ? The fly seems able to break the threads easily at first. But the silk seems to grow stronger—it cleaves to the struggling insect, it strangles it ; and at

length the spider finishes the deadly process. Do you feel the threads of some evil habit clinging about the limbs of your soul? Struggle to be free. Determine that you will not be a slave, but a man.

ROUGHING IT, OR SIMPLICITY
OF LIFE.

CHAPTER XII.

ROUGHING IT, OR SIMPLICITY OF LIFE.

IT is amusing to hear what some people mean by roughing it. If they go out for a holiday and stay at a few places devoid of couches and easy-chairs, and where the dinner service is somewhat defective, they come back as though they had been the heroes of a very hard campaign. In fact, the cutting off for a while of any luxury, however trivial, is regarded as a great hardship by some. Our notions of severity depend on our notions of ease.

There are very few who are called upon to rough it all through life. The sailor has a hard time at sea ; the soldier has to put up with many privations while out on a campaign ; and many men at the commencement of their course have hard work to make both ends meet. When this hardness is presented to us in the form of duty, it serves to strengthen the character. So too, when

young men take a holiday amid beautiful scenery at a small outlay, they come back not only invigorated in health, but with a new and higher tone to the mind. It is an advantage to young people voluntarily to rough it occasionally.

But the method which finds a special manifestation at some periods, and which has this special name of "roughing it" attached to it, may be usefully applied to all the circumstances of life. Society would be much more healthy, and its members would be happier, if modern habits were less artificial and expensive. Very many spoil their social joys by living in houses larger than they can afford to keep up. A smaller house would mean lower rent and taxes, and less expense in every way. Suburban life is often a snobbish struggle to keep up appearances. Simplicity, on the other hand, means reality. It means the conformation of our expenditure to our income, and the due proportion between the higher and lower wants of our nature. If a man lives within his income and yet spends nothing on books, magazines, lectures, music, and art, I do not call him a man of simple habits. He may be a glutton, or a sensualist, or a miser; but as there is no sense of proportion in his habits, he is no model to be imitated.

We have to beware of artificial wants especially on the lower sides of our nature. There is a growing tendency to increase their clamorousness by perverted ingenuity. I am no cynic, but I sometimes find myself smiling at the multifarious appliances of a modern dinner table. The species of spoons would be bewildering to a Darwin. Did the dinner-parties of Rome equal ours for luxurious appointments? Had the Romans a special instrument for taking up asparagus? Did they rejoice in the possession of fish-knives? Were they initiated into the mysteries of brown bread and butter and whitebait? Or could they have got so far in civilization as to need pickle-forks? These are curious questions that flit through one's brain as we think of modern dinner-parties.

But it may be said that the working classes, at least, are used to roughing it. I am not so sure. They certainly do not spend much on good furniture or on art decorations. Their sturdy common sense makes them do without many of the superfluous conveniences which bring ridicule upon those "above" them. But if they spend a large proportion of their wages on a Sunday dinner, or on drink, they have no sense of due proportion in life, and they cannot therefore be credited with simple habits.

The best habits of life are simple. If a man's happiness is dependent on the shape of a claret jug or on the pattern of his tea service, we cannot say that his tastes are simple or that his happiness is secure. To take the case of meals, for example, as being the most familiar, and as being the occasions for expensive display or for frugal simplicity, what is a better accompaniment to them than perfect cleanliness? The white tablecloth is a greater luxury to a man of good tastes than the costliest gold. Water and soap are cheap. A working man's wife might easily find time to serve up the daily meals with perfect cleanliness, and to make herself tidy before sitting down to them.

But there are many people who will not believe that anything can be worth having unless it costs much. They boast of their little trip to Paris, and are never tired of talking of the beauty of the Champs Elysées. But why do they turn up their noses at Kensington Gardens or Regent's Park? Simply because these are nearer home, and can be visited for nothing. Simple habits would lead a Londoner to admire the magnificent view from Westminster Bridge and the Thames Embankment. He would feel a pride in these things and often take a walk to see them.

One of the best reforms would be to discover

how people may meet together for social intercourse and amuse themselves in a simple way. Recreation is often too costly. Young men do not give dinner-parties, and therefore do not know the expense of them. But they often go to them; and, what with cab hire and clothes, this form of social intercourse is more costly than it need be. Charles Lamb's suppers were delightful. On a side table, cold meat and other food, with drinks, would be spread out. Each guest, however late, could refresh himself as he liked, and then, lighting the inevitable pipe, conversation would flow fast and the fun would wax hot. This is not a model, but its unconventionality may well fill us with envy. Entertainments of this sort would be within the means of many who never dream of giving a dinner-party, and they would afford an excellent chance to young men desirous of entering intelligent society.

But without waiting for any such reforms, we may easily, if we will, correct any tendencies to what is artificial^d and extravagant in ourselves. The great thing is to be real. This leads to simplicity. Artificial people go first class, when they can only afford third, in order to stand well with their neighbours; they take reserved tickets for a concert when unreserved would be more within

their means ; they attend the most fashionable church in order to get a nod of recognition from a few great neighbours ; they set up a horse when they should be spending extra money on the education of their children ; they wear expensive clothes and keep the tailor and milliner waiting for their money ; they cut all their poor acquaintances, and try to appear to be on familiar terms with as many of the lions of society as they can get to know ; they order poultry and game when butcher's meat would be more suitable for their table ; they drink champagne on credit when filtered water would keep off both debt and dyspepsia ; and, in short, they are social hypocrites.

How much better to rough it ! You will lose many acquaintances, but not a single friend. You will miss many a luxury and be bereft of many a soft flattery ; but life will not be without its flowing outlines, its pleasures, and its keen enjoyments. The retrospect of having spent more than you ought, or of having seemed what you are not, is never a happy one. But pleasures inspired by simple habits leave no bad taste behind. It is well for every man to see at times on how little he can live comfortably, and what incumbrances many of his most cherished luxuries are. For this purpose a season of roughing it, in the case of young men

and women, is admirable discipline, and all the more so if it be self-chosen. Try such seasons, come back to simple methods of life, and you will be better in health, in mind, in temper, in purse, and in character.

SARTORIAL MEN.

CHAPTER XIII.

SARTORIAL MEN.

I HAVE sometimes wondered whether men or women were more vain in matters of dress. At certain periods of life it is quite common to see a young fellow strutting along the street as proud as any peacock. Theodore Hook met such a one in the Strand, and stopping him, asked with an impressive air, "Excuse me, sir, but are you any one in particular?" Such a question has often crossed my mind when I have sauntered along some fashionable lounge. The unexceptionable attire, from the crown of the hat to the sole of the patent-leather boots, the band-box associations which clung round the whole get-up, the enormous outlay of starch suggested—these things would be shocking if they were not ridiculous.

What would some men be without their tailors? What indeed! They remind me of Thackeray's graphic picture of George IV.: "I look through

all his life and recognize but a bow and a grin. I try and take him to pieces, and find silk stockings, padding, stays, a coat with frogs and a fur collar, a star and blue ribbon, a pocket-handkerchief prodigiously scented, one of Truefitt's best nutty brown wigs reeking with oil, a set of teeth, and a huge black stock, under-waistcoats, more under-waistcoats, and then nothing." * What an ironical picture this of a king! It is a disgrace to our humanity that it should ever be an accurate delineation of a man or of a woman. Underneath that finely fitting coat—nothing! Underneath that fashionable bonnet and well-arranged hair—nothing!

If you want the morality and philosophy of clothes set before you in truly dramatic, picturesque, and pungent style, read Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus." Man is a clothes-wearing animal, and this being the case, it is as well that he should pay some little attention to his outermost cuticle. Dress is a passport through society. It is the first thing that makes an impression on outsiders; and the procuring of it cannot be therefore relegated to the easy method of writing an order on a halfpenny postcard. * Some ladies and gentlemen are abominably dressed; a few are utterly negligent. The

* Thackeray's "Four Georges," pp. 169, 170.

working classes of England are far behind those of France in the matter of dress. In Normandy you meet with the neat, white, well-starched cap ; in Lancashire, with a tawdry shawl ; in the midland and southern counties, with a dusty, ill-shaped bonnet. The men are worse. They never seem to change their working clothes when the day's work is over. Those who go to church and chapel have a black or dark suit for Sunday wear, generally creased, and often ill-fitting ; but on other days it is seldom that you meet with a nicely dressed working man or working woman. I have seen political meetings attended by men who had taken no trouble to wash off the dirt of the day either from their faces or their clothes. A brush up before meals is a part of civilized life, and it is to be hoped that it will spread more extensively among the working classes. Young men often lose situations for which they apply through inattention to dress. This is more particularly so in the case of a young woman. If she shows carelessness here, it is a sign of the lack of self-respect ; and there are few situations which she can be expected to fill efficiently under such circumstances. The stitch in time is essential to her social success. A lost button, loose pieces of braid, a tear in the dress, or a rent in the gloves are specially detected, and

meet with some kind of punishment. A young man is looked over and appraised before he can open his lips. If his shirt button is not sewn on (a thing he should be able to do himself), or if his hat is unbrushed, or if he be out at elbows in more senses than one, he may have immense ability, but he does not get credit for the fact. Why should a man spoil his chances in life for the want of a little care? The clergy are an example to us in this respect. Be a man ever so poor, with an income not equal to that of a common labourer, he generally manages to have a clean shirt and collar, a well-mended suit, and the hat of a gentleman. Poverty or straitness of means need not stand in your way, if only you are determined to maintain a respectable appearance. A good wife, mother, or sister can do more to keep up a man's appearance than the most expensive tailors. All honour to those who give the finishing touches both to their own clothes and to those of their male relatives!

It may seem as though we had forgotten the fops of both sexes; but we have not. The best way of avoiding over-dress is to pay some attention to the matter, to bring common sense to bear upon it, and to consider well about ways and means. There are few things on which men, and especially

women, can be so extravagant, if they like, as on dress. I am by no means inveighing against expensiveness, but against extravagance and unjustifiable cost. A costly dress may be both beautiful and justifiable. What would be foppishness in a man is not necessarily so in a woman. The latter will follow nature by seeing that there is some amount of beauty and colour in her clothing ; the former only becomes a foolish coxcomb by putting on all the colours of the rainbow. It is a drawback to some men that they do not naturally possess good taste in dress. The flaming tie is, then, their misfortune rather than their fault. But there are thousands of young people of both sexes who show, as it were, a laxness of moral principle in their method of clothing and bedecking themselves. They are, in fact, made by their tailors or milliners and dressmakers. Dress is for convenience first, and for beauty secondarily. Then it should conform in some measure to the work of each person and to the state of his funds. With regard to beauty and expense, a man can soon settle what his dress should be. A good fit and a moderate sum per annum are all that any "gentleman" need be careful about. A lady, or as we prefer to call her, a woman, may, as we have said, pay more attention to beauty, and, if she can afford it, to expense also,

than a man. But in her case convenience is certainly the first consideration. Let women be bold enough to give the law to their dressmakers instead of meekly receiving it from them, and we should not so often have to complain of the tyranny of fashion. High-heeled boots, tight skirts and tight lacing, back pockets and false hair, to say nothing of false jewellery, would not be the rage among sensible women, if only they determined to exercise their common sense. And after all, common sense is the great desideratum. It solves most difficulties of a minor kind. When the mind is duly cultivated, when there is a sense of proportion between what is demanded by self-respect on the one hand, and by society on the other, a man will never allow himself to be made by his tailor, nor a woman by her dressmaker. If it is low and vulgar to be threadbare and ragged, and to wear dirty linen, it is no less vulgar to be over-dressed. It is certainly "bad form" to flaunt up the aisles of a place of worship in a dress that calls forth every one's attention. Some think that it is well to learn "to glide through life in a respectable black silk dress." Yes, the body should "glide" through life, as the graceful swan through the lake. No noise, no flutter, no ostentation, but beautiful simplicity and simple

beauty in both man and woman. How much better, then, is a man than his tailor, or a woman than her dressmaker and milliner! Reader, drop a tear or smile a smile for the man made by his tailor.

IDLENESS, RAGGED AND
RESPECTABLE.

CHAPTER XIV.

IDLENESS, RAGGED AND RESPECTABLE.

THE most common kind of idleness is that which assumes the form of work. Indolence in its etymological sense means freedom from pain. Men do not find that sitting in an armchair insures them this freedom, and so they get something to do. The most difficult thing in the way of mental exercise is attention. To learn this it is necessary to pass through severe discipline ; and this means a kind of pain. The brain will not work till ^{it} is compelled, and it cannot work properly till it has passed through training. What is so evidently true in all craft of the hands is no less true of that organ by which the mind does its work. A man gets as physically tired of casting up accounts as he would of breaking stones. In both cases physical energy is consumed, the tissues are exposed to wear and tear, and a certain amount of exhaustion is inevitable. This means pain. To

avoid this many men have recourse to all kinds of subterfuges. They find that the body can only be kept healthy by a certain amount of alternate wear and repair of tissue; so they do not cease work, they only become indolent. In other words, they seek to be free from pain.

If we look back some forty years, we shall find that business hours have been much shortened. The tendency in the higher branches of labour is to concentrate energy. If this is not carried too far it is likely to prove most beneficial. We hear very much of the habit into which we have fallen of living too fast. If this be a true charge against our generation, it means not that our working hours are longer, nor indeed that the speed of work is dangerous, but that our play takes the form of work and continues the process of waste, which it ought to arrest and recover every day. Our fathers were indolent in the etymological sense of the word, for by spreading labour over so many hours they often worked without pain. There was no special reason why shops should be kept open till ten at night. The custom existed, and as a consequence the shopkeeper spent half his time leaning against the post of his shop door and gazing at the traffic of the street. To this day villagers have plenty of time to gape and stare at the smallest

sensation that may pass through their quiet and monotonous street. They are always doing something, but there is no strain, and so the work is but one remove from idleness.

This habit is a special temptation with young men. Their faculty of attention has not been thoroughly trained. The bundle of habits has not yet been entirely and strongly tied together. They find it easier to pursue a busy idleness than to give all their energy to the matter in hand. In many cases the nature of the employment is so intermittent as to favour this habit. Some shops are only frequented during certain parts of the day; and unless the windows have to be dressed or the stock to be looked to, there is much idle time hanging on the hands of the assistants. But even when this is not the case the temptation creeps in. A lawyer's clerk finds it easier to mend his pen or put his desk in order than to begin the monotonous work of transcribing. Even while he ~~types~~ his thoughts wander, and hence a word drops out here and there. The manager of a company is much more inclined to read the morning paper, or to stroll on 'Change, or to do a little business for himself, than to keep a check on the accounts and to cast up columns of figures. The undergraduate keeps chapel, joins a breakfast party, attends a

lecture or two in a listless way, has lunch, goes on the river, dines at the college hall, reads a hundred lines of Æschylus or a few pages of Livy, has a cup of tea and a smoke, and then feels that he has done a hard day's work. No such thing; he has been keeping up the balance between waste and repair of tissue with the nicest calculation. Take a typical man of commerce. He lives twenty miles from town. After a hearty breakfast he has a four miles' drive to the railway station; buys his newspaper, which he reads in the corner of a comfortable "first-class;" gets to his office at ten or half-past, opens his letters, gets a clerk to answer most of them, signs a few cheques, enters into important negotiations which tax all his nervous energy, takes a little lunch at his club, does an hour's work or so, and then returns by way of the "first-class" and open-air drive to his six o'clock dinner; after which, if it be summer, he strolls in the garden, and if winter, he slumbers, smokes, reads the paper, plays at billiards, and goes to bed. No doubt there is work here. If the transactions have been difficult, they have involved much nervous strain. But apart from this, many a life must be regarded as movement without progress—as indolence in the garb of work. Watch a bricklayer. There is often no concentration or earnestness in

his performances. They are of a very leisurely order. The tower of Babel would never have been contracted for if this kind of work had prevailed in the old world.

We are quite ready to detect and to condemn the idleness which is disreputable. The glib man who waits on you to unfold a strange tale of misfortunes, accidents, and troubles, smells of drink. Faugh! Show him the door. Another writes a capital letter, quotes Latin, and refers to a well-known friend of yours in a neighbouring town; but on reference nothing *is* known, except that he is a scamp. Idleness again! Show him the door. Another has walked two hundred miles, and arrives at your door late at night, with not a penny in his pocket. Will you turn him away? You cannot. You give him a shilling. But on making inquiry (a thing which should have *prevented* the shilling in two senses) you find that he has been begging for months. He finds that it pays, and so he has tried to make you one of his clients. These are cases recognized by every one as, visibly and outwardly, cases of disreputable idleness.

But the respectable cases, though vastly more numerous, are not so easily seen. Many young men think it no disgrace to live upon their parents,

or, what is worse, upon their maiden sisters, when their friends can ill afford to keep them. How many a *ne'er-do-well* has drained away the savings of his father, and left his mother an almost penniless old age. Let young men, at least, emulate the spirit of one, who though of low morality, yet is said to have exclaimed, "To beg I am ashamed." To be sponging on relatives, to be waiting what turns up, but in the meanwhile to be stretching idle legs beneath the mahogany of a too indulgent relative—these things disgrace true manliness. The case of a young woman is different. She cannot fight her way in the world as her brothers can; but even she may well pause before being a *burden* to those who are bound to support her. Let her be brave and industrious, and at least see to it that by kind help she earns her bread. In such cases as I have indicated in this paragraph, idleness is a moral disease. It arises from a dim sense of duty.

But what I have more particularly in view is the mental disease of inattention. Writing as I do for the young, I feel that this is one of the most common and specious things to be guarded against. When a mistake in any kind of work has been made, many think it a valid excuse to say, "I forgot." The reply is obvious, "You had no

business to forget." The memory will become an obedient servant to the will, if only it is treated properly. Lapses of memory are often only illustrations of respectable idleness. The diligent, earnest worker does not forget.

Much work done by young workers bears upon it this half-and-half character. It lies midway between laboriousness and laziness. The dusted room has some cobwebs left in the corners. The ledger of the clerk has not been posted for several days. The leading article smells of midnight oil, and shuffles before the public in slipshod English. The ill-digested sermon was evidently written late on Saturday night. These are instances of sluggishness which would palm themselves on society as illustrations of great and meritorious toil. Drones with the wings of a bee.

Bustle and bluster often pass for real work, but they as often denote virtual idleness. A lack of plan, the absence of a deliberate mapping out of our duties, leads not only to a waste of time, but to a waste of mental force. And where the mind does not put forth its whole strength, or where the body does not exercise the power needed to accomplish the work in hand in the best style, there is idleness. If you would have a

good draught of life see that the cup is full to the brim.

The loungers of society make a great mistake even from their own point of view. Horace says very truly that you must "earn your sauce by hard exercise."* Few men are to be pitied more than those who, born in the lap of luxury, find no work to do. To outsiders they seem to have "a fine time of it;" but they are often filled with *ennui*, and complain that, apart from some new sensation, life is a "bore." The relish and zest of life can only be enjoyed by the hard worker. It is he, after all, who luxuriates in the keen air of Swiss mountains, or in the cold plunge of the salt sea. There must be action if there is to be reaction; there must be enjoyable and earnest work if there is to be thorough rest.

The notions which many men have, and carry out, of retiring from business are both ludicrous and sorrowful. Having obtained a competence, they go with their unmarried daughters to some respectable watering-place, and expect to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*. But life becomes one long yawn. They have no occupation to fall back upon. When they have spent their mornings at the reading-room, their afternoons on the pro-

* "Satires of Horace," book ii. 2.

menade, and their evenings in making up their petty cash, life has revealed all its secrets to them. They have been hard workers in their time, but they are now pensioners on the amusements of a middle-class resort. Their work ran in a rut. They did not store up occupation as well as money for days to come ; otherwise their years of retirement might have been marked by much mental enjoyment and social usefulness.

I want to warn you away from all idleness. Perhaps the ragged sort may act upon you like a scarecrow, and you may, through self-interested motives, avoid positive sloth. But remember that indolence in some shape is your special temptation in these early years. Too much sleep, too much eating and drinking, too much frivolity, too much gadding about to see and hear this and that, too little plan as to the order of your duties and recreations, too much idle talk and too little reading, too much reading and too little attention and thought, too much contempt of details in your daily business—these are your temptations. Idleness that struts along the pavement flourishing its gold-headed cane, is neither mentally nor morally better than sloth that shuffles by its side in threadbare attire. Few things impede a voyage more effectually than a calm beneath the burning rays of a

tropical sun. How the sailors hate it! Rations run low, pure water is scarce, the cargo spoils, the health of the men suffers, and the ship is in a sea of death. It is the picture of the idler. May you never be becalmed!

THE POSSIBLE DECAY OF
REVERENCE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE POSSIBLE DECAY OF REVERENCE.

THE style of addressing parents in the good old times was very formal. A son called his father "sir." It raises a smile to read the Paston letters, wherein, among others, Margaret Paston addresses her husband as *Right wurshipfull husbonde*, and a servant begins his letter in the following terms: *Right reverent and wurshipfull sir and my especiall good maister*. These were common phrases of courtesy in the fifteenth century. Many of them lingered to the beginning of the present century. We are no sticklers for phrases, and on the whole we prefer the simpler and more natural terms which prevail now. At the same time, it would be a thousand pities to lose what was good in the old feeling.

When the first wonder of childhood passes away a strong reaction often sets in. The young man becomes wiser than all his teachers. Life is very

slow till he comes to push the world on with his vigorous arms. Impetuous in his disposition, he cannot brook the delays by which, as he thinks, necessary reforms are hindered. As to wisdom being with the old, he has a strong opinion that the very opposite is the case. The torrent of early feeling, even in generous souls, does not aid the growth of reverence.

Nor do the special circumstances of our own time help us much in the cultivation of this virtue. The foible of the nineteenth century is omniscience. There is wonder and there is poetry in science, but these are not the sides prominently presented in our own day. The know-nothing period has been succeeded by the know-everything one. It is considered "bad form" to be too much surprised at anything. Tell a young man of the period that astronomers have discovered that the sun's light will cease next month, and he will reply that he thought next week was the time fixed. It is the function of criticism to produce in us noble feelings concerning truly noble subjects. Instead of this, it has often debased itself to very vile uses. It is in a large measure responsible for the mocking and cynical spirit which poisons social and intellectual intercourse.

The animal spirits of a young man may easily

lend new zest to this tendency. There is nothing which he enjoys more than fun. Nothing is more justifiable and natural, and few things more healthy. But stay ; fun at whose expense, and at the expense of what ? There are some subjects that even the buffoon must let alone. You are not a pantaloon or a clown. Even if you were, it would be at your own risk to joke on some subjects. Draw the line rigidly and sternly, and learn by a delicate insight to reverence the truly reverential.

The Patriarch Job gives a touching account of the respect which he received in the days of his prosperity ; and, amongst other things, tells of the way in which, at his approach, "the young men saw me, and hid themselves." * You may generally tell when a young man is a gentleman by noticing his speech and conduct in reference to the elders. It is an agreeable thing to offer your arm to a charming young lady, but the old lady in her arm-chair would be cheered by the sight of your healthy face and the sound of your voice. The word "governor," with which so many dub their father, grates on my ear ; and it certainly is not pretty to hear a wife call her husband by his surname. These objections may be fastidious and old-

* Job xxix. 8.

fashioned ; but though we have no wish to return to the phrases of the Paston letters, it must be confessed that they sound better than the social slang of our own days.

How far this slang governs our thought and vulgarizes it, I am not prepared to discuss. It is a sign at least of changed feeling ; a feeling which I am not prepared altogether to condemn, but which I certainly would not praise or recommend. It bodes nothing but mischief when a young man has no deeper feeling for his parents than is expressed by the terms "governor" and "old lady."

The way in which public men are criticized by the press often aids the irreverence of the times. Free speech is absolutely necessary to the progress and preservation of national life and liberty. But in order to be effectual for these ends, it must be exercised within certain bounds, and it must be dignified. The character of public life will not be improved by prurient prying into private scandals, by low comedy, by the tittle-tattle of "Society" journals, and by the eaves-droppings and communications of literary scene-shifters.

The French Revolution broke up the mysterious sacredness by which institutions, constitutions, and administrations were surrounded. It has not been found possible to restore the old and exploded

pseudo-veneration, which consisted in scraping and bowing before anything or anybody that happened to possess an ornament of gilt. This destructive process was good as far as it went. But we must supplement it by cultivating the spirit of reverence towards all that deserves the exercise of that emotion. Instead of reverencing things because they exist, we have to do it for the intrinsic worth which they possess. This involves inquiry, thought, and the balance of considerations on our part. We must get at the root of things in order to find whether they are worthy of our admiration and care. Thus we shall find that true Radicalism and true Conservatism mean one and the same thing.

But this is no easy task. Reverence springs up only in a duly enlightened and cultured soul. It has its root in an illuminated judgment. The past throws its light on the present. Books of history will be of essential importance to you in forming your judgment as to institutions and facts. Your own heart may then be left to dictate to you what you shall venerate in persons and in places. If you find real heroes in the past, you will not fail to discern noble and worthy characters mingling in your daily life. May these objects of veneration never be shattered ; and if they are, be you careful

not to let this warm and subdued light depart out of the temple of your soul. Keep the windows open to all quarters, and there will be in your character no decay of reverence.

HOW TO TAKE A HOLIDAY.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW TO TAKE A HOLIDAY.

THIS chapter is not upon the general subject of recreation. It does not seek to direct the reader as to how he shall amuse himself during his leisure evenings ; and, finally, it is not addressed to men with families. A few words to the disencumbered may not be out of place. What I wish to say bears on the physical nature rather more than on the mental.

It is good, especially for dwellers in cities, to learn the art of taking half-holidays. Fortunately the Saturday is to many a day of partial release from work. A few hours are snatched from work. It is a pitiable thing that working people do not more frequently consult the health and convenience of shopkeepers. In some small villages the shops are shut for half a day during the week, though open on Saturday. Those who go shopping are often very thoughtless, and if their convenience

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~~were~~ consulted, shops would be open all night. One of the means of shortening the hours of unnecessary labour is for those who have the boon of rest themselves to show that they can enjoy it in a rational way, and also to be very careful not to impose late hours upon those to whom they give their custom.

* Young men and women would do well to make themselves acquainted with all the available spots of interest within easy reach of where they live. A few pence will take us some miles from the smoke of the town, and in summer we shall be landed in some green and beautiful country. A field naturalists' club affords an excellent opportunity for putting a scientific and interesting purpose into these rambles. Very few would care to go alone ; though solitude with a pocket volume, a geological hammer, a lens, or an angler's line has its peculiar charms. If there is no available club, two or three can easily be induced to set out on these expeditions in company. It is , astonishing what persistent effort after fresh scenery will yield, even in very unpromising neighbourhoods. The first step should be to take some conveyance in order to get at once into the country. Let no time or strength be consumed in walking through familiar and unlovely streets. Having alighted on the

platform of the little station, what could be more exhilarating than a walk of eight or ten miles? Young ladies would, no doubt, be satisfied with less. These excursions can be continued in fine weather right through the autumn and winter; so that nature may be studied in all her moods. But for rainy days, and for short afternoons, there will be a reserve of sights either in the city itself or in some neighbouring town. London presents endless interests of an historical character. The past is written in the names of its streets, and in the edifices, churches, and museums that crowd its chief thoroughfares. Yet how ignorant Londoners are of their own great city. I venture to say that there are hundreds of thousands who have never seen the interior of the Tower or of Westminster Abbey. How many shop assistants in the Strand could tell where the Savoy Chapel is, and of those who could tell how many have the dimmest idea of its past history? This ignorance could not prevail were the Saturday half-holiday properly utilized. And quite apart from knowledge, it would pay as a matter of enjoyment to be acquainted with topographical history. Writing in Liverpool, it occurs to me that very few of my fellow-inhabitants know that this town was the birthplace of the immortal Jeremiah Horrocks. He calculated when the

transit of Venus would take place, and, having made all preparations, had the unspeakable delight of observing it on Sunday, November 24, 1639. Very few know about him; very few have heard that he was born at Otterspool, three and a half miles from the Liverpool Exchange.

Or take Leicester. Are there many young men who have walked to Thurcaston on Saturday afternoon to see the birthplace of Hugh Latimer? It is a breezy country, with fine woods; and an Old England feeling takes possession of the imagination as we gaze on the ivy-covered cottage and the unobtrusive parish church. Let Preston young men take Carlyle's "Cromwell," and trace, if they can, the movements of armies and regiments between the years 1640 and 1660. The soil would become richer to them. It is needless to point out how some towns and cities are indissolubly linked with great names—Lichfield and Dr. Johnson, Bristol and Robert Hall and John Foster, Kidderminster and Richard Baxter, Edinburgh and John Knox, Glasgow and Dr. Chalmers, Matlock and Arkwright, Bolton and Samuel Crompton, York and poor Sterne, Salisbury and George Herbert, Bedford and Bunyan, Berkhamstead and Cowper, Birmingham and Priestley. But we must stop. The theme is endless. Let me stir you up to

inquiry about local celebrities and famous historical spots near your own home.

Most young people have at least a week or a fortnight's holiday in the course of the year. This opportunity is used for the purpose of visiting friends at a distance, but in many cases it yields neither social enjoyment nor physical health. I want to incite you to see your own country well during these seasons, and this you can only do on foot. Plans should be laid some time beforehand ; the railway should be used to plant you down in the midst of interesting scenery, and then, with a modest bag, fifteen or twenty miles a day can be easily covered. In this way the coast of Cornwall, the wooded scenery of Devonshire, the downs of Sussex, the fruitful gardens of Kent, the bold beauties of North Wales, the mingled grandeur and softness of the Lake district, the wonders of Scotland, may all be visited in turn. All these tours require money, it may be said. But more cash is spent in mooning about a crowded seaside resort, than in a pedestrian tour, where the tourist is content with clean but moderate accommodation. A large number are frightened at the idea of a continental tour. Not only does the expense scare them, but the language. Yet of most it may be said that if they are to see a

foreign land at all, it will be *during the days of their bachelorhood. It is, no doubt, highly desirable to get up a little French or German, as the case may be ; and when out-of-the-way places are chosen, this is absolutely necessary. But with the aid of Cook or Gaze every difficulty of this sort is removed out of the way. If a tour be judiciously planned and only a little luggage taken, going on the Continent is as cheap as going to the more distant parts of the United Kingdom. This is especially the case if you can stand the sea ; for you can then land at Antwerp, Rotterdam, or Amsterdam. As to expense, let me say that in the year 1867 I took a tour to the Engadine, with two friends, for three weeks ; and one of these reckoned his expenses from London and back to Brighton at £14. I do not say that we all did it for this sum. But we all saw some most magnificent scenery, had some splendid walks, and, I hope, enlarged our minds. In order to go this distance on economical principles, some, little roughing it has to be encountered ; but this is the very thing I recommend to young men, and to strong and vigorous young ladies. The little hill on the mountain pass, where you pay a shilling for your bed and sixpence for your breakfast, stands out in memory with far greater pleasantness than the

grand hotel, fitted up with electric bells, where you paid tenpence for being lighted to bed, and so on, according to the same scale. You go for air, for mountain scenery, for change, for nature's best sights; not for social grandeur and luxury. If you cannot enjoy fine brisk air and good exercise, with wholesome diet and a hard but clean bed, then stay at home. But if you are of the right sort, go by all means to Normandy one year, to Holland the next, up the Rhine and back through Paris the next, to Switzerland the next, to Norway the next, and, if you can, to Italy. But be careful to make a study of the country months beforehand. In order to see Holland, read Motley's "Dutch Republic." To see Paris, read Carlyle's "French Revolution," or Chambers's "History of France." To see Switzerland, study well the maps in Bædeker's Guide. If you know about places beforehand you are ready to receive the impressions which they ought to make. While another man is stumbling over pages of Murray to know what he ought to see, you can take the object in at a glance, without waste of time, and, what is more, without waste of energy. Reader and worker, take a spell of rest; get away from your work once a year; go out of your own little island occasionally, if you can; and I wish you "*Bon voyage*."

MIND OR NO MIND.

CHAPTER XVII.

MIND OR NO MIND.

WHETHER you will possess mental life is being determined during the years of your youth. Of course all persons have minds, but all persons have not active minds. Do not be frightened; I am not writing for scholars, but for young men and women of average abilities and opportunities. You will not be great scholars; for scholarship demands such an amount of time and such an absorption of energy, that, under your present circumstances, it is placed beyond your reach. The question which you have to consider is as to what amount of mental life, if any, you will cultivate with your present opportunities. Thousands slip into a routine kind of existence of alternate work and play; they have no interests beyond those which touch their immediate circle; they have no intelligent views of any subject, because they cannot bring any mental power to bear on the questions of the day; and

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life is therefore insipid to themselves, and uninteresting to any cultured companions whom they may happen to meet.

Possessing as we do an instrument of thought, it is natural that we should use it. But this instrument is peculiar. It is not a mere piece of mechanism ; it is subject to growth or decay. If we exercise its powers on trivial topics, it will become little and impoverished. Men who exercise their minds on small things only, lack largeness of view and breadth. They indulge in "small talk," and cut themselves off from intercourse with the great world of intelligence around them. So that you cannot misdirect your energies with impunity. It is equally certain that you cannot allow your mind to lie idle without serious consequences. You may not be conscious of these consequences ; you may know nothing of the fair garden of Eden from which you are excluded ; but none the less will you suffer indescribable loss. You will at least be conscious that you are not fulfilling God's purpose in your creation. He gave you a mind—a mind capable of use, of growth, of beauty, of joy, and of influence. You may, by your abuse or neglect, maim and paralyze your faculties. Your mind may be like a clock that will not go, bearing the semblance of power, but nothing more.



There is a great world of thought and truth around and above, behind and before us, which ought to allure us to mental inquiry, and even sometimes to mental agony. History is the concentrated thought of man. The interesting thing about the past is not *what* men have done, but *why* they have done their deeds. A few leading facts about bygone days (and this is all that many mean when they speak about history) are not enough to satisfy us. We are impelled to inquire into the reason, the laws, the causes and consequences of facts. The beauty and heroism of some actions, the deformity of others, the thoughts and desires and mistakes of men—these are the traits in the past which call out our soul's attention. Hence we must have books, and read and know them. They crystallize the past for us. They are the mirrors of the present. They are question and answer about the future.

If a man should travel blindfold through Switzerland, we should think him next door to a lunatic. Yet a vast number of men and women travel blindfold through this vast and splendid region of thought and truth. It is true that they do not know what they lose, but they know enough to be sure that blindness is a tremendous loss. It is a thousand pities that they do not lift at least a

corner of ~~their~~ bandage, that they may obtain a glimpse of this great world.

The great difference between one young man and another ~~is~~ in the will. Circumstances are, no doubt, to be taken into account. Some have very long hours, very arduous manual labour; ~~their~~ homes have no marks of culture about them; ~~their~~ town or village presents few literary advantages. It is, of course, ~~hard~~, under these circumstances, to pursue the intellectual life; but ultimately the difference between a foolish and insipid young man and an intelligent one may, in most cases, be traced to wilful choice or wilful neglect. I am not arguing here in favour of a vast amount of book knowledge, or of a culture which can only be learned at a university, or of an intellectual activity which can only characterize those who are released from the toils and cares of business. My point is that an intelligent interest in God, man, and the world may be obtained by every reader of this book, if only he wills it.

But then the pity is that so many do not will it. ~~What~~ they read does more harm to the mind than good. They dissipate and intoxicate and destroy mental energy by their love of sensationalism. They do not exercise their minds for the sake of enlightenment, but for the sake of a tickling

pleasure. Anything that promises ~~mere~~ novelty is eagerly swallowed. Advertisers of quack commodities, sensational lecturers and preachers, flaming playbills, the low novelist, and the penny-a-liner find ready clients among such people as ~~these~~.

Supposing, then, that you wish to separate yourself from this large and undesirable class, how are you to set to work? You ~~have~~ determined to exercise your mental powers to the best of your abilities. This determination is, after all, the chief and essential thing. Other things will follow as a matter of course. You will find ways and means by your own instincts.

Sometimes the mental life gets a start from reading a good solid book. I may perhaps be allowed to refer to my own case as one in point. I was conscious of a distinct mental awakening through reading Sir James Stephen's "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography." This book had a literary colouring about it that was very attractive. Effects of this kind will be produced on susceptible youths by any book that possesses mental power. Probably Macaulay's Essays have acted upon ~~young~~ minds in our generation as much as any one book that could be named. The essays are not long enough to subject the mind to any great strain,

and yet they are so redolent of wide and varied reading as to be very stimulating and suggestive. They provoke to further reading, and this is a great gain. A good start is very important.

But the same end may be obtained in other ways, though the reading of books is by far the most important. A good literary and debating society confers benefit, because it leads its members to read, write, and speak; that is, according to Lord Bacon, it makes a full, an accurate, and a ready man. The learning of a language acts in the same direction. It quickens the mind, and sharpens the mental faculties. An intelligent companion exercises a stimulating effect. But it will be observed that all these methods lead you back to books, to study, to thought, and to reading. Popular lectures are, in a measure, harmful if they are regarded as a substitute for personal mental effort. Attendance on them is certainly better than the vacuity which marks the leisure hours of so many. But again I say, these things are only good in as far as they lead to direct, earnest, and energetic effort on your own part. Whether you will exercise this sleeping power or not depends on your own choice. It is not a question of more or less favouring circumstances. It is rather a question as to whether you

will use the opportunities which you happen to possess. With you, as with all others, it is a choice between mind and no mind. Your life oscillates between this yes and no.

THE TRUE METHOD OF THE
MENTAL LIFE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRUE METHOD OF THE MENTAL LIFE.

NO one can cultivate the mental life without books. These are, it is true, not the only means of improving the mind, but they are the most important. Conversation and social intercourse with intelligent persons will do much to sharpen the intellect. For the first seven or eight years of life, this is the chief instrument of awakening the mind of the child. Hence stupid parents, who can only indulge in small talk, need not be surprised if their children show no signs of special mental activity. How can they? Unless they pick up thoughts and facts from companions, or from elders outside their own home, they have no food with which to feed the mind.

When this stage is passed much dependence must be placed on books. It would, perhaps, be more beneficial than most suppose if school books were taken into life after school has been left. No

doubt they deal with the dry and technical rules of knowledge. But a young man might do many worse things than study a grammar, a geography book, an atlas, a simple treatise on natural philosophy, or one on physics or chemistry. Education is never finished ; and I am persuaded that in the school sense it is, in very many cases, laid aside too often. A youth of fourteen or fifteen is only just beginning to feel the joy of acquiring knowledge. Having mastered the technical principles, he might then proceed to their application with great zest and relish. But just as he has passed through the drudgery of learning, he lays aside his books and betakes himself to business. Now, it would surely add enjoyment and intelligence to life, were he to carry on some, at least, of the threads of school days. It is evident that he must leave much behind. But let him consult his taste, and direct his studies for, say, an hour a day into some educational channel. Suppose him to be facile in learning languages. Perhaps, he has translated a book of Cæsar at school. It would do him no harm, and might do great good, were he to seek to know in their original tongue something of Virgil and Horace. But perhaps his mind moves in another groove. He is fond of physical science. If so, at a very slight cost he can rig out a laboratory,

and, with the help of some elementary treatise like that of Chambers's, can at least master the first principles of chemistry. Should he be a young man fond of the niceties of his own language, what an interesting field of inquiry opens out in reference to its primal elements, its growth, and its present construction. This might in time lead him to be a philologist, and such books as those of Max Müller would not be beyond his comprehension. There is no reason why a schoolboy should not, when he enters business, become, in some slender measure, at least, a student. He cannot do much, but he can do a little. Over-study would weary his brain and undermine his health, but a slight amount would be a positive delight, and would be a sure path toward intelligence. If young women want to become fit companions for such young men, let them adopt the same method. The chief thing is to watch the taste and proclivity, so that the hour of study may become a joy.

A few words here may not be out of place as to the method of study. Professed students should have a distinct and settled plan for every day and for every hour in each day. One ought to be able to tell what special book he will be reading at a particular hour of the day. But in the case of those for whom I more specially write these pages,

no such rigid plan is possible. Yet in their case some method is highly desirable. There are times when solid reading will be distasteful to a weary body and a jaded mind, and at such seasons a definite and resolute purpose will help to carry us through. Besides which, much time is wasted for want of a plan. To feel determined to get through a certain book or course of study keeps our mind in a useful path. It prevents mere movement without progress ; it saves us from aimless wanderings, and, therefore, from intellectual weakness. For business men and women it is very important to make good use of spare minutes. Much may be done by the right use of a quarter of an hour daily. I know of a mutual reading society whose members bind themselves to read something solid for this space of time every day, or to pay a fine for neglect ; the fines being devoted to prizes for the best readers. Any plan that makes us realize the vast value of minutes is good. Six months of persistent industry will reward us with such mental riches that we shall need no further argument to prove that this simple plan is both feasible and successful.* Make good use of spare time. The dinner

* It took me about eighteen months to read Shakespeare through, giving about three or five minutes each day on most days, while snatching longer opportunities at railway stations

hour is invaluable, if you can extract twenty-five per cent. of it for reading. Make *regular* use of spare time. Don't be spasmodic. Don't study by fits and starts.

If the willingness to study and the proper method be taken for granted, then arises the much larger question as to what books to read. The difficulty of answering this question arises chiefly from the immense number of books in existence, and also from the great variety of taste in readers. There are books and books *ad infinitum*, and there are readers and readers *ad infinitum*. Moreover, it is possible to bring a good reader into contact with a good book with little apparent result.

Some race through volumes as though they were paid to read a certain number of pages. They are much like some tourists who rush through the finest scenery at the rate of sixty miles an hour. The result in both cases is a confused medley and mixture of thoughts and emotions. It is not what you eat, but what you digest, that builds up the tissues of the mind. Others, again, are such slow readers that they do not take in the general ideas of a book, and at the same time do not carry away its details in their memories. We do not recom-

and in railway carriages. Pocket volumes are invaluable for this purpose.

commend any one, least of all young beginners, to be mere dippers into volumes ; at the same time, some of the best readers are those who, by a kind of instinct, are able to get the juice out of the orange without eating the whole of it. Dean Stanley, all of whose writings show wide reading, once confessed in public that he had seldom read a book right to the end. This is well enough for a practised reader and thinker, but it will not pay in your case. At the same time, do not be too slow a reader. Seize ideas as quickly as you can. The writer's end is attained if he impresses his thought and facts upon you. If he has neither thought nor facts, why read him ? For the style ? No writer has a worthy style, unless he has thought beneath it. If there be neither thought nor fact, be sure that the author is imposing upon you by mere clap-trap.

It is this listening for thought which will save you from becoming too slow or too fast a reader. Begin the habit of looking out for truth in all statements and literature, and you will then learn to regard illustration and dramatic form as the garments of thought, and not as thought itself. From this point of view the preface is often most important. It reveals in a few concise sentences the purposes of the author, and lays down the main

lines on which he proposes to travel. If the book is overloaded with notes, you will often find that a mere glance at these will suffice. But each book must be judged in this respect on its own merits. Bayle's Dictionary, for example, presses most of its best and quaintest wisdom into the notes. Miss these and you miss almost everything. On the other hand, Froude's "History of England" conveys all needful delight and information in the text, apart from the notes, which refer us to authorities. Ellicott's "Life of our Lord" is valuable on account of its suggestive notes; while Farrar's "Life of Christ" would lose all its charm were the general reader to be continually pulling up to consult the footnotes.

There is only one way in which we can become good readers. It is by thinking as we read. Attention is, of course, necessary; but *ex-cogitation*, *i.e.* the evolution of our own thought on the subject in hand, is still more necessary. In order to this, the practice of taking notes should be begun early. This is a mechanical way of forcing ourselves to think, besides being a great help to memory. With very young beginners I should recommend the habit of taking down all words which are not fully understood, so that they may be looked up at leisure in a first-class dictionary. Every new

word will stand for some new thought or shade of thought. It is by enlarging our stock of ideas that the mind in the first instance expands. Afterwards we learn the art of letting the mind play freely round these ideas, and this is higher and more life-giving exercise. Food must be taken in, but it must be assimilated by intellectual effort.

We shall not proceed far without feeling the need of note-books. Some advocate a very orderly system in reference to note-books. An Index Rertum should be kept, they say, and every thought and fact put under its appropriate heading. In this way, by means of an alphabetical commonplace book, we can preserve the results of our reading, and on every occasion make a ready reference to our stores. This is, no doubt, an admirable plan, and when it has been adopted for years it must be the source of much gratification and illumination. I fear, however, that most of us find life too short to adopt such a plan, or at least most will think so. I wish it were otherwise; for I am persuaded that if men and women read fewer books, provided they adopted this plan, they would be positive gainers. What they would lose in quantity, they would gain in quality. I have only one real doubt about this method. It is this. There is the danger of allowing the

dead note-book to do what the mind itself ought to do. The brain is a most marvellous register of thought and fact. The more we trust it without overtaxing it (for brains dislike taxes as much as the Jews did), the more faithfully it will serve us and our higher purposes. Get and make an Index Rerum, if you can ; place your notes under their proper alphabetical headings ; but be very careful that you do not let it lie outside your mind, like a bill once paid.

For many obvious reasons some of the best books should be your own. It is better to go with one meal less per diem for a little while, than to be without half a dozen of the immortal authors. When books are our own we can pencil them with notes and marginal reflections and references, we can underline important and striking passages, and we can treat the volumes as familiar friends. A fly-leaf at the end will enable you to put down the page where a rememberable fact is to be found. But distinct note-books are best. And when these are employed continuously, they become an interesting little library in themselves.

There is a class of books, of which we shall have to say something further on, whose sole end is to gratify the feelings and give pleasure. You do not find the novel reader taking notes. Other books,

especially poetical ones, combine instruction with gratification. The idea will then be so transparent that you need take no note of it. The book contains only a few thoughts, and therefore the memory can easily take them away. Those who are in the habit of listening to sermons with the purpose of remembering them will find out that discourses have a double object, first to convey truth, and secondly to produce an impression. Now, there are few sermons which contain more than three or four general thoughts: let us be thankful when there are as many: these can be "taken down," and thus the impression may also be the more readily recalled. So it is with poetry and "literature", in the technical sense. This department should be visited not so much for the sake of mental discipline, as for the sake of cultivating our love of beauty and of enlarging our imagination. It is a relaxation to read Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Longfellow, or Tennyson. Exceptions occur, however, even in this department. We ought to make some of the dramas of Shakespeare a downright study. Hamlet should be thought about as well as read. And certainly some parts of Milton, and much of Wordsworth's best poetry, call for some amount of penetration before enjoyment begins. Even Tennyson is not always perspicuous

as for example when, in the "In Memoriam," he weaves into one garland personal feeling and the doubts and faiths of the age in which we live. What shall we say of Robert Browning? For compressed thought, for psychological insight, for poetical and noble contendings in behalf of faith, for concrete presentation of character combined with abstract descriptions of motive, and for mastery of language both new and old, where shall we find his equal? But he requires study. Do not read the "Death in the Desert," or "Rabbi Ben Ezra," or even "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Morn," without your note-book. Whether all this is true poetry, only future generations can determine. In the meanwhile it will repay you to treat this and some other of the loftiest poetry as matter for hard study.

We shall have more to say about the kind of books it would be desirable for you to read. At present we content ourselves with calling attention to the method and aim of reading. Amongst other things, read that you may read again; read one book that you may be led on to read others. It is a good sign when a book has led you to make further inquiries as to the subject in hand. There is nothing better than a suggestive book. One that provokes thought is often as good as one that answers the particular points on which you needed

information. A Bradshaw is complete in itself, and hence is rather dull reading. But a good guide-book refers you to all kind of events and authorities, shows up your own ignorance, and will not let you rest. There are some books which are complete in themselves. They no more suggest thought than the story of Old Mother Hubbard. Others stir you up and urge you on, and send you peering into old book-shops, or induce you to make inquiries at some public library. Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection" will send you to Leighton, and will whet your desire to know a little about German thought. What if you should by its means be led to read Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"? If so, I hope you will understand it; for if you do, a great crisis in your mental being will have been passed.

Another canon for your reading is, I think, worth remembering. Try and read something of the best authors every day. Much of our literature is only the watering down of the noblest books. Newspapers and magazines of the higher order are well worth reading, but you will never get true breadth unless you have something better. Periodical literature is ephemeral. It is only intended to treat of passing events, or if treating of enduring interests, to touch them with a very light hand. To spend several hours a day over

such productions is a great mistake. The newspaper should be read with rapidity ; the magazine should simply be skimmed. A reserve of time and mental force should be left for some established author. Circulating libraries tend to make readers overlook the standard writers. It is thought to be good form to know all the new books, however rubbishy they may be. There is a great rush for these, and great eagerness to read them ; but they often leave the mind jaded and empty. Standing out from the vast multitude of books, there are a few which have won immortal renown. Their worth and immortality have been already decided. You have but to take the verdict of others, and to act upon it. Choose these for your companions, and you will have the noblest conceptions of the noblest souls for your dearest friends. With such friends as these you cannot but be raised in the scale of mental life, good taste, lofty imagination, and pure morality.

Lastly, read that you may meditate. Let the thoughts produce other thoughts in your mind. It is easy to hold a book before your face, and dream of other things. The next easy thing is to read and receive all that the writer says. The most difficult, but at the same time the most paying, method is to form a judgment on every paragraph,

and to turn its thoughts over and over in the mind till they suggest others of a cognate character. We are not mere vessels to be filled at a tap. We have within ourselves hidden fountains of thought and reflection which can only be opened up by the engineering skill of a master mind. The question after reading one of the best books should be—not, 'What have I received? but, What have I been led to originate? New trains of reflection will be started if we pause on our way, and the existence of these in the mind is the best proof we could have, not only that we have been reading a good author, but that we have been reading in the right method.

WHAT BOOKS TO READ.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT BOOKS TO READ.

IN the previous chapter I considered the general principles which should guide the reading of those whose time is limited and whose opportunities are few. I propose now to indicate what kind of books it would be best for such readers to take up. It is easy to say, as I have done, that only the best should engage your attention ; but the question arises as to what are the best books. It is not impossible to answer this inquiry in general terms, though each reader must be left to his own judgment as to which among these best books he will make his chosen companions. What are the best books ?

The best books absolutely are those which tell most of man and the world in which he lives ; the best books relatively are those which appeal most persuasively to the good instincts within the reader, and awaken the harmonious exercise of all his

faculties. For purposes of instruction, education, and mental training, the best books are those which are suited to the capacities of the reader, awaken most readily his attention, strengthen his reason, and store his memory. Euclid may be the best book for a given purpose ; but, as it does not appeal to all the faculties of the soul, and does not therefore awaken a harmony within the man, it cannot be classed among the absolutely best books. Homer has colour and atmosphere, completeness, and orblike symmetry ; he is a harpist who touches all the strings of the heart and of the mind ; and so one generation of students after another testify to his unsurpassed excellence. He is among the kings and emperors of authors.

One thing is clear: that no one man can read all the books that have been published. A selection must be made. In making a choice, one of the first things that has to be considered is individual taste. Minds are not cultivated alike ; and as there is such a varied field, it is sheer waste to drive the mind in directions to which it has an aversion. All general remarks and advice have to be received, then, with caution. If this chapter sends you to consult with a cultured man, a lover of books, and one possessed of common sense, it will answer the end for which it is written. In the selection of

your particular line, you must have regard to the make of your mind. It is of prime importance that the little leisure time you can snatch from business should, if possible, be spent in a way that will awaken the spontaneous and delightful exercise of your faculties.

This leads me to say that there should be a backbone to all your studies. What is a body without the spinal cord? Your reading will be desultory without some general purpose running through it. If you should gather pearls by such reading, you will have no cord to thread them upon. As a general rule I recommend young people to begin with History, and with the history of their own country. Young men are often keen politicians, and they are always naturally interested in passing events. It is most desirable that they should be. But present events are often the results of past complications, and can only be understood in the light of what has already transpired. An intelligent interest in current affairs can only be possessed by those who know something of what has gone before.* Besides which, history

* Works on the English Constitution form a separate group. Hallam, May, and Bagehot are names which at once suggest themselves. Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in France" feeds the judgment of the reader even when he dissents from the opinions expressed. There are few weightier treatises in the English language.

often leads a young man to find out his true bent ; for it sums up in itself all subjects, and reviews men of all pursuits. There is no better beginning for a young reader than one of the best histories. It might be well in some localities to work from purely local associations out to wider circles. There will perhaps be a statue in the town to some notable man, or there will be some memorable house or spot ; and these can be made the basis for further inquiry and information. The best plan, however, is to plunge at once into Macaulay's "History of England." Its picturesque style, its rolling periods, its keen insight into constitutional principles, its hero-worship, are all calculated to take the hearts of young readers by storm. Apart from its own great intrinsic excellence, it will perhaps kindle a fervid love of historical study which will prove of immense service. Macaulay's history marked a turning tide in the conception and carrying out of the true historian's work. He interested himself not only in kings and statesmen, but in the people. His long and deeply informed chapter on the social state of England in 1685 is the model of many larger efforts. Green's "Short History of the English People" is conceived on the same lines. History ought to make us acquainted with man at his best, and the great historians are

not, therefore, content with unrolling tableaux of battle scenes and of political cabals. They show us how men lived, what they thought and believed, what were their most cherished purposes, and how these were hindered or accomplished. Hence their works are volumes of stirring power.

It is often advisable to work our way backward from our own times to those most remote. This is not the school method of learning history; but it is by far the most interesting, and in some respects it is the more intelligent mode of the two generally pursued. We begin at the fruit and work our way down toward the root. For this purpose we may take the industrious volumes of the Rev. W. Molesworth. They treat of the years immediately preceding the time in which we are moving. The pages of Justin McCarthy have more glow, finish, art, and literary power about them, and will leave delight as well as information in the mind of the reader. A biography like the "Life of Palmerston" or the "Life of Cobden" will sometimes suffice as a starting-point. It is even becoming the fashion to write the lives of living statesmen; to wit, those of Mr. Gladstone and of Mr. John Bright. Particular events sometimes form the subject of elaborate literary work; and hence certain phases of foreign politics may be best studied in the brilliant pages

of Kinglake's "Invasion of the Crimea." But having made a beginning you will not readily break off your reading. The eighteenth century will be scanned by means of Lecky, Leslie Stephen, and Stanhope; to say nothing of contemporary and earlier authorities like Clarendon, Kennet, and Burnet, all of whose works form more pleasant reading than modern readers suppose. For the seventeenth century the painstaking and diligent volumes of S. R. Gardiner stand out conspicuous even amid very first-rate literature; and yet they may prove too dry and elaborate for a young beginner. Masson's "Life of Milton" compresses nearly all that can be known about the political and ecclesiastical history of the great poet's times; but here, again, the "general reader" may feel that he is being kept too long on one period. Yet a thorough knowledge of what took place during a few years gives a stronger tone to the mind than a smattering of universal history. Perhaps Carlyle's "Cromwell" is one of the best introductions to the seventeenth century. It keeps the eye long enough on one period to leave a clear image behind, and yet not so long as to fatigue the mind. It has the great merit of allowing the hero to speak for himself; and the editor, willing to act as guide between letter and letter, flashes and rolls his dark lantern

on every gloomy verbosity, so that it is the reader's own fault if he does not catch some light amid the smoke and din of the dire conflict. After reading Carlyle, we may work our way still back, through Froude's noble piece of mingled labour and skill, not untouched by a kind of romantic *penchant* for putting the best side of a suspicious case ; until by a tremendous leap over five centuries we come to Freeman's "Norman Conquest," marked by untiring research, an accuracy almost painfully minute, but none the less praiseworthy, and a style which, though unadorned, is a perfect model of nervous, straightforward, and undefiled English. Such histories as those I have named, with others left unnamed, are the pride of our country, and their riches ought to be explored sooner or later by every intelligent man and woman.

But if these frighten you, there are volumes, such as the "Epochs of History," of much smaller dimensions, in which you would find interest without weariness, and sufficient minuteness to remove the impression of vagueness often produced by ordinary school books of the higher order. If you wish to find a somewhat exhaustive list of authorities on different periods, you would do well to read the remarks which Green, in his "History of the English People" (an enlargement of the

"Short History"), prefixes to each book as he proceeds.

If you have an ecclesiastical bent, I should recommend you to pursue the same process. Work out from a narrow circle to a wider. You are, or ought to be, attached to some particular denomination of Christians. Learn all you can about the origin and history of your own people. But do not stop there. A Methodist ought to know a great deal about the life of Wesley as it is unfolded by Southey, or more recently by Tyerman. A Baptist ought at least to have read Cramp's "History of the Baptists." An Independent has a work of the first class in Stoughton's "Ecclesiastical History;" he may know everything about his spiritual ancestors by consulting the laborious volumes of Dr. Waddington; and the play of first principles is admirably depicted in the lucid "History of the Free Churches," by H. Skeats. Episcopalians have both general and special histories—some scholarly, like Burnet's "History of the Reformation;" some philosophical, like Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity;" others theological, like Hardwicke's "History of the Thirty-nine Articles," or Proctor's or Blunt's "Book of Common Prayer;" and others, again, popular, like the admirable little books published by the Christian Knowledge Society. From a

Unitarian point of view we have J. J. Tayler's "Retrospect of the Religious Life of England," a small book of much worth and impartiality.

Now, supposing the young business man to take up one of these books, and the one which interests him in his own community, he could not help being carried on farther. His mind would expand, his judgment would be sobered, and his charity would be enlarged.

There are many who have a strong desire to inquire into theological problems. Theology has been very much popularized during the last twenty years. This is partly due to the way in which our weightiest magazines have discussed the deepest matters, and also to the greater freedom which has characterized the utterances of the pulpit. In whatever way we account for the fact, the fact exists; and in dealing with it we still strongly recommend the historical method of study. Young minds are often overbalanced by mere novelty. History counterbalances this tendency. Most of our modern controversies have been forestalled, at least in germ, in previous generations; and, in any case, all of them are the result of previous discussions. Take for example the most characteristic inquiry of our own times—that, namely, which goes under the name of the "Free Handling of Holy

Scriptures." Leaving altogether out of view ante-Nicene writers and the Fathers, and confining ourselves to our own country, you will find in Dean Colet's "Expositions," and in the spirit which his teaching infused into such men as Sir Thomas More and Erasmus, much reverential inquiry into the origin of the various books which compose the Bible. Lines of inquiry which trouble or rejoice our hearts may be traced back through many generations, and the settlement or unsettlement of thought in bygone days will help us to a right solution of many a perplexing problem. Let us remember that theology is one of the most difficult of sciences, that it involves philosophical questions of radical importance, and that the "heat" which its debates engender is a great hindrance to its successful study. I do not say this to discourage you from entering upon its inquiries, but simply to show you that there is no royal road to truth in this department of knowledge, even as there is none in any other. Time, patience, reading, and excogitation are essential.

So I would urge in this department the reading of a book like Shedd's "History of Christian Doctrine;" or, if that be too hard, Neander's "Ecclesiastical History" is somewhat easier reading. To students I need only mention names like Dorner,

Mosheim, Gieseler, and Schaff. Those whose time is limited would, I imagine, find what they need in "The Student's Ecclesiastical History" (Murray), "The Ancient British Church," and the "History of the Church of Christ" (Religious Tract Society); and from an Episcopalian point of view, Short's "History of the Church of England." For touching the outside of deep problems in a popular way there is Wylie's "History of Protestantism," which I ought not to omit to mention. But when once you are on the track one book will suggest another, and you will, if deeply interested, need very little advice. I commend the historical method because it will keep you from being carried away by novelties, and because beneath the teaching of a judicious historian you will be able to see the weakness of many theories which at first fascinate you, and the strength of many others which you may at first be disposed to despise.

But it is quite likely that you have no theological tendencies, and I do not blame you. A man can be a good Christian without becoming a theological student. The claims of science are placed before us in a very strong light in our day, and rightly so. The study of nature and of human nature from the physical side will always prove fascinating to many minds. The books best suited

for this purpose are those which detail facts, without trenching on the region of theory. In this department of study the historical method should not be adopted, except by advanced students. It may be very interesting to know something about the physical speculations of the Greek philosophers, and those who care for these things may begin by turning over the earlier parts of G. H. Lewes's "History of Philosophy." But if your mind has a scientific bias the only true method is to feed it with facts. No better beginning could be made than with the shilling Science Primers published by Macmillan and Co. Most of the authors of these little books have written more advanced ones. Indeed, you can hardly think of these eminent men without recalling the particular science to which they have given their lives. Yet do not think that the scientific workers of the past have been superseded. You can still be fascinated by Hugh Miller, by Bell on the Hand, by the Bridgewater Treatises, and Owen on Comparative Anatomy. Look over modern fields of investigation, and you see at once what an immense advantage any young man has who wishes to become familiar with any one of the sciences. Sir Charles Lyell's "Principles of Geology" is perhaps too big a book for you ; but Geikie's "Primer of Geology" can be read through

in three or four hours, and is much more interesting than the most sensational novel. What wonders Norman Lockyer has to tell of the nature of stellar light, and of the workings of the spectroscope! Sir John Lubbock will beguile you by the hour about the habits of insects, and Darwin will almost make you laugh at the queer tricks of insectivorous plants. Roscoe is a great name in Chemistry. If you get a microscope or an electric machine (the latter should be made by your own hands), you will be beguiled into the purchase of the right books. For summer holidays, what better knowledge could you have at your fingers' ends than the facts of the vegetable world? Hooker's Botany, or an admirable American book entitled "How Plants grow," by Asa Gray, will soon speed you on your rambles. Above all, try to get a tolerable knowledge of your own frame. Huxley and W. B. Carpenter are admirable teachers in this department. I have not mentioned Astronomy, Physical Geography, Physics, Zoology, Natural Philosophy, or the Applied Sciences, because I do not wish to overload this chapter with mere names. If you make a plunge I am satisfied that the right books will not be wanting. Let them be by the best authors. Study the masters, not the second-rate writers.

There are very few business young men, per-

WEEK-DAY LIVING.

haps, who care for such hard subjects as Logic and Mental Philosophy. I was surprised and gratified when a postman once asked me to recommend him a good book on Logic. I mentioned Jevon's shilling "Primer," and after he had mastered this I advised him to get Whateley's "Principles of Logic;" and then, if he had time and energy, to go on to Archbishop Thomson's "Laws of Thought." It would have been useless to mention Mill and Hamilton at such an early stage; and it will be creditable to him if he masters the first little book. If you go on to Mental Science, remember that there are two schools—one the material, and the other the spiritual or ideal; the former tracing back all mental phenomena to physical conditions or causes, and the latter holding to the immateriality of the soul, and to the reality of an unseen personality in every human being. At present the former school is, perhaps, the more powerful; but there will, no doubt, be a reaction. In the meanwhile a study of the history of Philosophy will show you the alternations of thought from Plato and Aristotle down to our own time. Read Schwegler's "History of Philosophy," translated by Stirling, or G. H. Lewes, or Maurice's Lectures. This is better than to make your head ache over

WHAT BOOKS TO READ.

Locke or Brown, or Reid or Hamilton, or Bain or Paley. 'You will understand such authors best after you are interested in ~~their~~ subject. But in order to gain this interest, I warn you that much hard work lies before you. If you are not prepared for this, you had better seek pleasanter paths.

No pleasanter path could, perhaps, be chosen than a perusal of some of the books which go under the title of *General Literature*. This is a wide and a rich field. It is a study capable of the most flexible treatment. You may make it the instrument for understanding the genius and growth of the English language. Trench on the "Study of Words," or Morris's "English Grammar," will send you far back to Piers Plowman and Chaucer, or to some of Arber's reprints, cheap and admirable in every respect, of classic but unread books. Or you may be led to look at the growth of thought, the propagation of ideas, the gradual development of style. Some history of English literature will then become a necessity. If Stopford Brooke's be too elementary and sketchy, you will find what you want in Morley or Chambers. Shaw ~~and~~ Marsh (Murray), Spalding and Angus, are, ~~perhaps~~, too much of the school-book type for you. For freshness of view,

vivacity of style, and vigorous, humorous common sense, with a foreign flavour for condiment, read Taine's "History of English Literature"—that is, if you are not afraid of four volumes. The critics are worthy of your close attention. We have few better book-tasters than Matthew Arnold. His fastidiousness, which blunders in practical politics, serves him in good stead in the exalted and undisturbed regions of literature. Leslie Stephen, Macaulay, Brimley, R. H. Hutton, P. Bayne, are critics whom I mention almost at random, because they happen to have come under my own eye.

But the true pleasure and profit are obtained when we get behind critics and historians to the authors themselves. Choose the best, and master what you read. Be an enthusiast, if you like, for a special author, and sustain the fever heat till you get an enthusiasm for another. This chapter is already too long, and so I will reserve a few observations for another.

THE BEST BOOK.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BEST BOOK.

THE Bible is the best book. Comparisons are sometimes drawn between it and the sacred books of other religions, but all such comparisons only serve to show the infinite superiority of the Bible. And yet it is often a very dull book to young people. Perhaps it has been used as a series of lessons or tasks, and consequently severe and even painful associations cling round it. But a little consideration will soon show that it is not to be judged by any such feelings as these. Its readers may be dull and insipid; but it will be admitted that every book is somewhat wearisome till we understand it. The dulness and insipidity of our minds are not to be charged to its pages. A treatise on chemistry is not very charming to the raw student. A prosaic soul cannot enjoy poetry, and finds the loftiest lines of Milton or Shakespeare an intolerable weariness. There must be

a certain amount of sympathy between the reader and his book if he is to understand and appreciate it.

Even from a mere literary point of view, the Bible is a marvellous production. It is a collection of writings, some of them amongst the oldest extant writings in the world ; others reaching back nearly to the beginning of the Christian era. The Bible is a small library of tracts, treatises, chronicles, hymns, prophecies, biographies, and letters. Each Book published apart from the rest makes but a thin and unpretentious volume. The Book of Proverbs can be carried in the waistcoat-pocket. Genesis could be read through in an afternoon. The Psalms are a small volume of religious poetry. These different Books have individual characteristics of their own, and their varied authorship betrays itself both in style and matter. Isaiah soars on wings of song ; Jeremiah prostrates himself in words of melancholy lamentation. Matthew is practical ; John is mystical ; Peter is homely ; Paul is speculative. Yet portions of these diverse writings were collected in one canon by the Hebrew people, and the more recent part by the Christians at the beginning of the second century of our era.*

* Westcott, "The Bible in the Church," p. 120.

This collection was formed gradually. There was no common consent on the part of the writers thus to bring their productions side by side. This common consent would, of course, have been an impossibility, inasmuch as the writers lived in different generations. Each writer seemed to be content to do the immediate work which befell him ; and all of them appeared to be unconscious that they were instruments in the production of the grandest book that the world has ever seen. It is a singular and suggestive fact, therefore, that the writings should have been gathered together ; and those who believe in a Providence will not fail to recognize the hand of God in the remarkable history of these writings.

But the internal elements of the volume are as striking as the external history. The wonderful thing about this Book is that, notwithstanding the variety of its contents and the difference in their dates, and also the progressive nature of its truth, there is a marvellous and, as we believe, a supernatural unity about it. Its writers lived at different periods of the world's history : some of them wrote to remonstrate with sinners, and others to tell the simple story of national prosperity or adversity ; others of them to pour out the grief or the gladness of their hearts into the ear of

God; and others, again, to relate or explain the great biography of our Lord. And yet a golden thread of unity runs through all their moral and spiritual teachings. This would not be a surprising thing if the various Books had come from one hand, or had been the production of one age, though of different hands. But it is a remarkable fact when we consider the widely varying circumstances and the very distant dates which mark these productions. This harmony, we think, can only be adequately explained on the hypothesis that these writers were under the direction of one Mind, that they were all moved by one Spirit, and that they all fell in, consciously or unconsciously, with the one Divine purpose which was consummated in Christ's redeeming act on the cross of Calvary. Apart from such an explanation, the Bible stands as a lonely perplexity in literary history; and its nature, and even its existence, are a puzzle which no scholar can unravel. Its unity bespeaks its Divine origin. Its oneness is stamped upon it by the One God.

But regarding its interior texture from a spiritual standpoint, we have greater reasons than these for our marvel and our gratitude.

There are certain contents in the Scriptures about the existence of which there can be no dis-

pute, for the most cursory eye discerns them. As we turn over these pages we find HISTORY on a large and transcendent scale; BIOGRAPHY with a truth, a naturalness, and an insight which have never been equalled; DIVINE LAW thundering its demands and surrounding itself with invisible sanctions: we find the inward and deepest experiences of mighty souls uttering themselves in PSALMS whose pathos and thrilling gladness find their echo in every saintly heart; we come upon PROPHECY, rebuking with stern and unfaltering accents the sins of the present, and pointing with monitory fingers to the perils of the future; we confront DOCTRINE sitting in its seat of authority and laying down the precepts of a holy life in proverb or parable, in sermon or epistle; we are startled by MIRACLE as it stands like some archangel in the path of history, bidding us behold and prepare for the day of the Lord; and, above all, we see Jesus the Christ, the Redeemer, the King of Men, the ONE BEING, by whom and for whom and from whom are all things. .

We cannot read the Bible without seeing that it treats of religion in its profoundest and most abiding aspects. God and man, and their manifold relations, are the theme of its teachings. How the Divine and the human are to be brought

into harmony is the problem which it professes to solve. Its history is not a mere record of battles, of rising and falling dynasties, or of the social condition of the Hebrew people. Its history is distinctively religious, its record relates to God's government and authority, and its annals are those that have to do with the spiritual interests of mankind. Hence in its pages you seem to hear two voices. One is full of wailing, of complaint, of desire, sometimes, indeed, breaking out into praise, but always containing, even in its notes of worship, an undertone of sadness. The harp has a solemn sound; sometimes its strings are broken; sometimes dark and brooding sayings seem to breathe forth their wailing at the touch of the Psalmist. Aspirations are mingled with deep and bitter repentances. The trumpet stops of the organ have their sounds mingled with the tremolo notes. Man climbs to the keen air of the mountain-top, and he descends to the deeps where wave rolls on wave.

But then we listen again, and we hear that other voice, coming forth through the troubles and confusions, through the sins and rebellions of our race. How calm and how authoritative are its accents! We hear it in the garden of Eden, in the gentle breathings of those golden hours of communion

with God which man enjoyed in the days of his pristine purity; we hear it calling on 'patriarchs to strike into new paths of enterprise and religious resolve; it comes through the terrible thunderings of Sinai; it writes its warnings on the walls of Babylon's splendid and fated palaces; and, last of all, it is uttered in the Person of Christ.

But the religious element which all readers find in the Bible argues the presence of a revelation. This Book is a long series of revelations, related first to the times in which they were originally given, and finally, in their essential elements, to all times. So consistent and harmonious are all these utterances that they make one complete, transcendent, and supernatural revelation of the Divine Will. The existence of God being taken for granted as a fact which needs no proof to intelligent and aspiring men, His nature, His attributes, and the character of His moral government are the subjects of many a persuasive passage in Holy Writ. The undiscoverable is there made known, both about God and about our moral obligations. The fact that God governs man is central in this long line of revelations. God's hand is laid upon us, and we are made to see that we have no absolute rights to our own lives or to our own plans. God says to man and society,

"You must." The sense of Divine obligation is laid upon us with a pressure from which there is no escape. No one can read his Bible without feeling, "If this Book be true, I must not live as I like." It meets man, not on terms of equality, but with a tone of overpowering and undisputed command. It tells of a government that is supreme, of a law that is absolute and the transgression of which brings certain suffering, of a tribunal which is universal in its jurisdiction, of a morality which receives its highest sanction from the Will of the Supreme, and of a mercy whose forgiveness is offered to all those who truly repent.

The two great pillars of this Divine revelation are God's holiness and God's love. In order to teach the first, man had to be awakened to a due sensitiveness as to the nature of holiness. The task was difficult. It was like trying to recover a lost sense. By smoking sacrifices, by lustrations oft repeated, by dire calamities and judgments, men were taught that in the midst of God's nature there was a fire of burning and unquenchable hatred of sin.

With regard to the second pillar of the Divine message, it may be observed that the word love was almost coined by the New Testament writers. It was "born within the bosom of revealed re-

ligion.”* The idea is original and unique. It receives new power from the fact that it is combined with the austere holiness. But in and by itself it marks out these Scriptures as different from all other writings. All the tenderest elements of our own nature are used and exhausted to explain the mercies and goodness of our God. The strength of a father’s affection, the depths of a mother’s love, the ministrations of the lonely watcher by the sick-bed, the relentings of a heart that cannot bear to think of punishment and ruin, the peculiar relations sustained by an Eastern shepherd to his flock, the friendship that sticketh closer than a brother’s love, the endearing ties that bind together husband and wife, the patriarchal bonds subsisting in “the good old times” between servant and master, the bands of kinship and of country—all these are pressed into the varied and striking imagery with which God would tell out the story of His love to our rebellious race. And when Christ had exhausted the verbal message in the matchless parable of the prodigal son, it still remained true that God’s love was higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth.

But the great peculiarity of the Bible is that in it we have God’s revelation through a Life. In

* “New Testament Synonyms,” by Archbishop Trench, p. 42.

the Old Testament we have hints and foregleams of the coming Person ; in the New Testament we have the Person Himself. Who Jesus Christ is will ever remain the most interesting question as long as the world lasts. No young man can begin to wrestle with the great problems of existence without finding that the greatest question of all is, "What think ye of Christ?" The answer which we give to it shows the drift of our life, and is a prophecy of our eternal future. And as the young men and women of each generation confront that problem, they will all in turn be compelled to consult the Evangelists for the only adequate solution. Strauss may reduce this Life to a myth, Renan to an improbable romance, the author of "Ecce Homo" and others to a problem in moral dynamics ; but Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will ever have to be recognized as the true expounders of that mighty history. The great difficulty with which the opponents of the supernatural in Christianity will always have to contend is the existence of the New Testament. The Bible holds its supreme place in the world, not because of its literary beauty, not because of the elevated tone of its moral teaching, not because of the wide and far-reaching principles which inspire its historical records, but because it pre-

sents us with God, with God manifest in the flesh ; because it is the record of the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of the eternal Son of God.

One of the most unfortunate things about this subject is that young men so often suppose that they must believe a theory of inspiration before they can profit by the Bible. This is an entire reversal of the natural process. Children do not believe a theory about it before they love its words, and find God through its teachings. Practice comes first and speculation after. There is no need to know the constitution of the sun before we warm and illumine ourselves by its rays. Nor is there any need to build up elaborate theories about the Bible before reading it and profiting by it. We must, of course, accept its history in the main as correct ; but starting from that simple standpoint, we shall find ourselves a long way on the road on which it proposes to take us. If any man finds that the Book of Exodus does him no good, or that he is puzzled by the Books of Kings, or more puzzled still by the Book of Ecclesiastes, we should reply, Why not turn to Books, or even single chapters, that really help your spirit to find God ? The people in Madagascar found God through a few pages of the Book of Psalms. If

the Bible was given piecemeal, God will not blame a young man for taking it bit by bit to help him heavenward. Taking it! Yes, we should employ the positive method. To judge by the way in which some young men talk of the Bible, you would imagine that it contained nothing but an account of the cycles of creation, and of the Deluge. We might at least postpone the reconciliation of geology with what we suppose the Bible was meant to teach, till we had found God. We should then, perhaps, discover that the Bible is, as to science and history, on a level with the Books written in the times to which its various parts belong; but that its one signal peculiarity is that it reveals God to man.

There is a destructive criticism abroad which is ever peering into every little difficulty, tracking every suggestion of doubt, and making the most of real or apparent discrepancy. Such a spirit infects some of the ablest literature of the Continent and of England; but it more often comes before young men in coarse and vulgar forms, expressed perhaps by those who have the "little knowledge which is a dangerous thing." If we are anxious to find defects in the human setting of the Divine Word, they will become apparent to us. But in that case we shall probably miss the vision of that glory and

eternal life which are in God, and the discovery of which should be the supreme, and at first the exclusive, object of our search.

For the true use of the Bible is to bring us into communion with God as He is revealed in Christ our Lord. It teaches us an art, not a science: the art of loving and obeying Christ our Lord. It bids us walk; it is no curious explanation of the science of spiritual activity. Its object is intensely personal. It brings God's message to every reader, and it unveils God as the Father waiting to forgive, through Christ, every penitent sinner. Its intention is to awaken the spiritual life within us, and to sustain that life by warnings, by promises, and by manifold teachings. Literary investigation, Biblical criticism and revision, are all most important branches of scriptural study. But they are to the Bible what astronomical observations are to the sun. The multitudes depend for their light on the shining of the sun, not upon scientific observations. The new version of the New Testament, published May, 1881, will be a great boon to all English readers, because it more faithfully renders the original documents into our own tongue. It should be used and studied assiduously by all young people especially. But the great question will still remain to be answered by each reader for

himself, as to how much of God he has discerned through the messages which God has sent. All other topics are side issues. To see God, to know Him as the Father of our spirits, to love and trust His Son, to be born from above by His Spirit—these are the main purposes for which these Scriptures have been granted. Millions have gained these priceless blessings from a devout and prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures ; and every earnest soul may in this generation find in them the very light and love of God.

“God is not dumb that He should speak no more ;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor :
There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.”

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS
LITERATURE.

CHAPTER XXI.

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE.

IN the realm of general literature there are a few great authors which at once suggest themselves to the English reader. To begin with our own time, we have Carlyle, who is a *littérateur* as well as an historian. His pungent and penetrating sarcasm, his uncouth humour, his turbulent sentences, are embalmed in "Sartor Resartus" more securely than in his "History of Frederick the Great." The "History of the French Revolution" is a philosophy, a dream, a "prose poem," much more than, and as well as, an account of facts. But Carlyle is not one of the great names in universal literature. It is at present difficult to assign him his true place, for he is too near our own eyes to enable us to keep him in the proper line of perspective. You will read him without servility and without mistaking his mannerisms for his genius. Let not any modern reputation cloud your vision of the truly

great names: Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth. These are the planets of the first magnitude. Not far from them are Chaucer, who is too gross to be read by indiscriminate minds; Spenser, whose quaintness, charming to scholars, is an obstacle to others. Burns and Byron are men of genius, but you would have to pick your way most carefully to find a clean path through some of their verses. Postpone them for the present. Even Shakespeare, alas! is not free from grossness. There is not a line in Milton or Wordsworth from which the most pure mind need turn away. If you should be ready to vote Wordsworth dull, read Matthew Arnold's essay, and the selections which he has made with so much care and poetic tact. Take his little volume for your text-book for a few weeks, and work yourself into a Wordsworthian enthusiasm. You will not suffer from reaction. Take one of these three, with all the aids at your command, and, since they are veritably the three greatest writers of our country, your taste will inevitably be raised and your mind enriched.

Confining ourselves for the moment, however, to writers of our own time, Ruskin stands out with a style as artistic as the subjects of which he treats. Sometimes limpid as a trout stream, as in the "Seven Lamps;" sometimes incisive as an etching,

as in a few critical passages on Sir Walter Scott in his "Fors Clavigera;" sometimes majestic and splendid as the clouds, as in "Modern Painters;" at other times as didactic as a sermon and dogmatic as a preacher, as in the "Crown of Wild Olive;" and then, again, as minute and special as a scientific lecturer, as in his "Ethics of the Dust"—he presents a majestic and almost prophetic appearance in the domains of literature. It is not necessary to follow all his reasonings and to admit all his conclusions in order to be one of his admirers.

One of the best modern biographies is Dr. Arnold's Life, edited by Dean Stanley. Of biographies and of sermons there is no end. Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is said to be the best biography ever written. That the popularity of published sermons does not depend upon theological bias is sufficiently indicated when I mention the three very different names of Newman, Robertson, and Spurgeon.

Poetry should for the most part be kept as a side dish; yet it is not always easy of digestion. With Longfellow and Tennyson you will, of course, make a close and pleasant friendship. Will you ever brace yourself to master the half-philosophical, half-ethical, and wholly poetical work of Robert Browning? He does not write to please, as perhaps,

according to popular notions, a poet ought ; but if you should enrol yourself among the select circle of his disciples, you will owe untold mental delight to his teaching. Mrs. Browning's sonnets you should at least know, and her "Aurora Leigh." Her poetry will be a fit introduction to that of her husband.

We have no essayists (*pace* Sir A. Helps and A. K. H. B.) to compare with the quaint and delicate outpourings of Charles Lamb, or with De Quincey's crow-quill disquisitions, or with the essays of Addison and Steele as they appear in the pages of the *Spectator*. So that if you would be a student of English literature, you must inevitably go back to the past. Do not be for ever hovering, like a moth round a candle, about the precincts of the circulating library. Let the critics do a large amount of reading for you ; leave them to discover a new Milton or another Shakespeare. In the mean while you can betake yourself to old Thomas Fuller, both for wit and information ; or you can read the immortal classics of our tongue—Butler's "Analogy," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Shakespeare's "Hamlet," and

others that might be named ; and when you have read them, you can read them again, till their style and thought saturate your mind and ripen your literary judgment.

I have not spoken of foreign or ancient classics, because I am writing for those whose time is limited, and whose power of reading other languages is undeveloped. It is not, however, to be forgotten that such classics, as Homer, Virgil, Cicero and Horace, Demosthenes and Thucydides, can be read, by means of most admirable translations. The same may be said of the Italian Dante, and of the German Goethe.*

Magazines and newspapers run away with the time of most readers, and leave them no opportunity to cultivate even the smallest corner of the vast field of literature proper. As you cannot read all, and must draw the line somewhere, see that you leave yourself time to get above the local and temporary circumstances of life. Periodical literature is intended to convey facts of present interest, and to assist in the formation of sound judgment on these facts. To receive this twofold benefit it is certainly not necessary to read all the murder cases, all the trials, all the accidents, all the

* The two series of books entitled Ancient Classics and Foreign Classics for English Readers contain much valuable information put in a popular and readable form.

speeches, all the advertisements which find their due record in the daily paper. Nor, unless we have the ambition to obtain a kind of omniscience, is it desirable to stuff our minds with all the articles of the monthly magazines. In order to know what is worth remembering, it is often necessary to have the courage to be entirely ignorant about the last new thing in ephemeral literature.

If you have followed one of the lines of serious reading which I have indicated, the question of novel-reading will settle itself. The danger of novels is that they contain an element of intoxication, which often inebriates the mind and unfits it for sober thought and duty. The issue of novels through monthly magazines has one advantage. It prevents the reader from reading too much at the time; and when the novel is of really good workmanship, it prevents that habit of skipping by which some of the best passages are lost. It is common to compare novels to pastry. If we are to confine ourselves to the digestive figure of speech, I would venture to say that a good novel is like a good glass of water. There is not much in it, but it materially assists the enjoyment of more solid food. There are some who seem to be able to dispense with all liquids. Dry sticks! If there is to be

plumpness and contour in the figure of the mind, the healthy palate desiderates a little moisture. As to novels, then, read only the best, and only a few at the time. Probably half a dozen a year would be the limit to a good reader. A bad reader would want more. Make a beginning with Sir Walter Scott. If you like the "Heart of Midlothian" with inexpressible delight, your fortune as a novel-reader is made. If it seems heavy, I fear you will turn aside to Ainsworth, and to the nameless herd of three-volume stories, whose only end is to excite the feelings, or even sometimes to pander to our worst passions. But if you like to remain on the high levels of literature, you have a rich store of delight in opening the pages of some of our best writers. The thumbnail sketches, or rather, as a friend of mine calls them, the sketches on ivory of Miss Austen; the weird and gloomy power of Charlotte Brontë; the slap-dash, high-falutin of Beaconsfield; the pathos and poetry of George Macdonald's earlier efforts; the political earnestness and moral fervour of Kingsley; the fine colouring which William Black puts on Scotch scenery; the wonderful analytical penetration and wide-spreading, but not lofty, imagination of George Eliot; the caustic and yet kindly humanity of Thackeray; and the splendid genius, the un-

rivalled humour, and the generous sympathy with the poorer classes of Charles Dickens—all this makes a treasure-house of rich literature well worth exploring. If you will only use these authors as you would drink a glass of water, you will need no grandmotherly advice as to what amount of time, if any, you should give to novel-reading. It is for earnest and pure-minded young men and women that I write. Reading is to elevate your taste, to ripen your judgment, and to expand your intellectual faculties, and also to make you a more efficient servant for good to your fellow-men. If you have aims inferior to these, I waste no words on you. In literature, as in all else, there is dirt, slime, filth. We know what kind of animal wallows in the mire. On this kind words are wasted ; but on those who value and are resolved to improve their manhood and womanhood, these few cautions and counsels may not perhaps be thrown away.

CULTURE FOR THE MILLION.

WEEK-DAY LIVING.

is a strong desire on the part of the educated classes to assist those less fortunately placed, so that there are few who may not find somewhere a helping hand.

The first thing is to get well grounded in the three R's. If any one cannot read, write, and cipher properly, he is at the outset debarred from entering the kingdom of knowledge. An evening class should be chosen and diligently attended, or a friend should be asked to render the required aid. A domestic servant will often find her mistress only too glad to give her an occasional lesson when the children are in bed. But if the early education has been neglected, the defect must be resolutely made up. It is, of course, useless to think of culture without such fundamental preliminaries as these. And in reading, the vocabulary should be gradually enlarged by the aid of a dictionary. All hard words should be noted down and looked up. In listening to speeches, sermons, and addresses, this habit should be formed, so that the art of reading may be a gradually expanding one.

Supposing, then, these early difficulties to have been surmounted, our contention is that for every serious young man there is abundant opportunity of culture, apart from the pursuit of those set

subjects of study to which we have referred in previous chapters. No one need be discouraged. The culture will not be deep, not scholastic, nor even methodical; but it will be infinitely preferable to gross ignorance. Habits of observation are of immense importance, for they enable us to pick up interesting knowledge under all conceivable circumstances. A man who sees what is passing around him will often be more usefully educated, and form a pleasanter companion, than he who obtains all his knowledge from books. For there is very much in our civilized life to raise and expand the mind. There is education in thoughtfully watching the crowd at a railway station, or even in reading the advertisements which stare us in the face as we wait for our train. The shop windows are at once an attraction and a means of imparting knowledge. But if you can find entrance into a dockyard, a manufactory, a cotton-mill, or an engine-house, you cannot fail to be instructed as well as interested.

The habit of asking questions is one that is not favourably regarded in some quarters. It is a habit which may sometimes savour of impertinent curiosity. But it is often discarded lest the questioner should expose his ignorance. A false pride is a great obstacle to the attainment of

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common knowledge. We probably learnt more in the first six years of our existence than we have ever learned since. How was this knowledge arrived at? Most of it was obtained by a persistent system of examination and cross-examination. If you are on good terms with a child for an hour or two, its questions are sometimes innumerable. There is no reason why, with proper checks and appropriate phrases, this habit should ever be left off. Every one with whom you meet knows more about his particular trade or work than you do. There are always some interesting details to be obtained from every intelligent man by simply and frankly expressing a desire to be informed. Few things give greater pleasure to a genuine worker than to explain some of the details of his craft to one whom he regards as an outsider. Respectfully carried on, the system of asking questions is an easy road to knowledge. With those two habits, then, of observation and of questioning, you would undoubtedly acquire a kind of culture, not of the highest, but one which would yield you solid pleasure and make you a more acceptable member of the community. This knowledge is not obtained from books, and some would deny it the name of culture. We shall not argue about á name. It would sharpen your wits,

it would make your faculties more supple, and, to put things on the lowest ground, it would raise your market value in the world. A dull mind makes a dull servant. Brightness, keenness, and ready observation react on the work which we have to do. If a man would put soul into his work he must have soul to put there. And this soul we call culture for the million.

Apart from its religious uses, a Christian Church, with its educating and benevolent agencies, is a cultivating power. Given two young men in the same circumstances and with the same class of mind, one of whom belongs to a religious community, and the other of whom owns no such allegiance, and the balance of mental advantage will be in favour of the former. A man cannot listen attentively to the most commonplace sermons, especially if he takes notes, without having the powers of attention and memory strengthened. If as a scholar or as a teacher he is induced to study the Bible in some consecutive order, he will be a still greater gainer. We leave out at present all spiritual considerations, and affirm that, from the merely educational point of view, regular attendance at a place of worship, and at the same one, week by week, is a positive gain to the mind.

Though thousands may be frightened away from the study of books, there are few who have mastered the three R's who do not see literature of some kind. The daily press is an immense power. I am inclined to think that well-to-do people often spend too much time in reading the daily journals. They read the same things over and over again, or else they give their attention to facts and circumstances which are quite unworthy of being looked at. Yet much of the general and average intelligence of our country arises from the constant perusal of the daily papers. If we consider the enterprise necessary for maintaining a paper and for obtaining the latest news from all parts of the world, and the intelligence necessary for the quick expression of judgment on passing events, we shall feel that a morning paper is one of the most remarkable products of modern civilization. The cheapness of these journals places them within the reach of all classes, and constitutes them one of the most frequent, if not powerful, influences in promoting the culture of the million. How will you read the daily journal? To look upon it as the means of communicating to you all the latest atrocities, murders, and thefts is to debauch the mind. Its function as a mirror of the morals and acts of the day must not be overlooked. But unless

these acts are brought to the test of principles of justice, of honour, and of Christian truth, you will read in vain. The leading article ought to be a help to you in this direction. Unfortunately there are many papers which set up false standards of right, which substitute temporal expedients for unchanging principles, and these will lend you no assistance. But, apart from its social aspect, a newspaper ought to be to you what the Books of Chronicles were to the Hebrews—a record of what is said and done in the light of Divine judgments. It could not but exercise an expansive power over your mind if you would see in it illustrations not only of political philosophy, but of Christian morals. And even if you are unable to bring these general lines of thought to bear on passing details, yet you could utilize the newspaper for obtaining that information about home and foreign affairs which is brought to your door by other means.

Magazine literature may be employed in the same way. Entire devotion to ephemeral works tends to distract the mind ; but this is better than listless indifference to the world of knowledge. There are few, whatever their attainments, who can afford entirely to ignore this literature. In your case it would be well to choose out some thoroughly good monthly, and to see that you master its con-

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tents. Do not be satisfied with the tale, but read the more solid articles.

In large towns you will enjoy a great variety of opportunities for obtaining general culture. One of the most important of these is a course of good lectures. The English do not employ this method of instruction so widely as they might ; yet every winter there is not a town in the kingdom where some solid and pleasant instruction may not be obtained through some of our ablest teachers, who think it no condescension to appear on the platform. A consecutive course on a given subject is better than a series of isolated and disconnected lectures, but they are a greater strain on the attention. A splendid lecture will live in the memory, and be an abiding influence for good for many years. I say nothing about the numerous other means within your reach, such as free libraries, museums, art collections, good music, and reading-rooms. Avoid mental dissipation, idleness, and the waste of youthful energy on mere nothings. You cannot then fail to have a smack at least of this culture for the million.

CYNICISM ; OR BEWARE OF
DOGS.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CYNICISM; OR BEWARE OF DOGS.

THE mental life is bound up with the moral. For the sake of discussion you may dissect the contents of the soul, and separate the two in thought. But they are inseparable. Men may fancy that they can work in the dry light of abstraction and theory, and that the intellect can reach its conclusions apart from the movements of the conscience or of the affections; but no man can ever become as mechanical as Babbage's calculating machine. The mind proper receives a healthy tone or the reverse from the moral and emotional nature. One of the things that threatens to vitiate and spoil the intellectual life is cynicism.

It is a prevalent habit in England. It does not force itself on our notice like intemperance or self-indulgence, but it is none the less injurious to the finer instincts of men and women. It consists in a depreciation of high principle, of old truths, and of self-denying habits of life. As there are different

dogs in the world, so there are many breeds of cynics. Some disgust you at once by their foul language, their swaggering ways, their vile habits, and their disreputable jocularities. Have no converse with a man whose habitual talk is unfit for woman's ears. But these are not always the most dangerous companions. You can see that they have fed on garbage, and your purest instincts make you shrink at once from their company.

The most dangerous class is composed of those who insinuate their doubts and denials in cultivated and charming language, and beneath the cover of habits which are at once regarded as perfectly gentlemanly. Sometimes they do not themselves know that they are cynics. They have caught the tone and habit from some one else, and they go on throwing out their innuendoes and uttering their sarcasms with little heed as to the effect which they are producing. There is a wholesome dread on the part of most young men of being thought milk-sops. They dislike the preachy-preachy tone of talk fashionable in certain circles. They have a positive delight in shocking their elders by the utterance of "very advanced" opinions, which all the while they have in their inmost heart not adopted. They would sooner be cynics than weaklings and mere echoes.

But nothing robs the mind of its bloom so readily as this-habit, ~~be~~ it adopted from any reason whatsoever. There is a fine instinct in favour of truth and right which is to the mind what the bloom is to the grape. How beautiful that instinct is ! What a thousand pities to rub it away by unnecessary friction ! A little flavour of the caustic gives relish to social life ; but save me from the man who is nothing but a walking mustard-pot.

The modern Diogenes does not live in a tub, and is not clothed with rags. He is an educated and eminent member of society. He wears a gold chain and an eye-glass, and his accents are decidedly refined in tone. But he has lost the simple, primitive love of right and justice. He is a kind of Mephistopheles who believes that every man has his price. He is willing to pat a working man on the back and call him "my fine fellow" when votes are in question. But in essential manhood and womanhood he has no belief. Scratch his skin, and you will find the dog nature beneath it. For a dog may be highly educated ; he may be fit to sit in the lap of a duchess, and to adorn the hearth-rug of a drawing-room, and to be petted by all the ladies, and to be on good terms with all the gentlemen. But the chief end of his existence is, after all, nothing but dog's-meat. Anything,

therefore, that tends to lower your mind to the merely animal, and to call away your intellectual faculties from their only proper end, the pursuit of truth, will lead you on to cynicism.

What are some of our cleverest journals but the organs of the dog nature in man? They snarl at humanitarianism, as though it were a sin to cherish good feeling of any sort. They sniff about all the "books of the season" so that they may make points and carry the laugh. They affect a lofty superiority to the party strife of the day, and from the inner chamber of the editorial sanctum deal out pompous advice, which many mistake for the oracles of wisdom itself. There are other journals whose sole end seems to be to retail all the tittle-tattle of the West End, and to scrape together the rags and bones from the clubs of Pall Mall. This revival of Paul Pry would not matter much, were it not that the region of social morality is brought beneath the burning glass of these writers. And what they touch they generally contaminate. They are the Peeping Toms of literature. As you read their productions it is like hearing the light cough, or seeing the shrug of the left shoulder or the slight elevation of the eyebrows at the mention of a gentleman's name, or—for they are not particular—of a lady's.

This is one of the hectic flushes on the face of

Old England. I have taken extreme cases to show you what the disease is. Its earliest symptoms are not nearly so severe. It has more the air of fun and of ridicule at first. But we have to decide as to what subjects shall or shall not come within the circle of our laughter. Contempt is an emotion which should be reserved for things and persons contemptible. It is apparently easy to rid ourselves of the difficulty and duty of honest inquiry by a wave of the hand. It is thus that many save themselves the trouble of reading the Bible or of examining Church principles, or even of looking into Christianity itself.

Take some of the great words in human language—justice, honour, freedom, private judgment, religion—and ask yourself how you feel and act when the case of others is brought before you in relation to these things. I have known men to act very cynically on a committee who would have been ashamed of an individual deed. The corrupt tendency is within every man; and you may rest assured that, unless it be counteracted, it will work mischief on your mental faculties. You may still have a bright mind, but it may be like a dark lantern, the light being obscured by a thin but opaque piece of cynicism. The subjects of thought and study are not, therefore, the only things to

which you should attach importance. It will be yours to cultivate a pure desire for truth, and generous instincts which respond at once to moral ideas. To gain this end shun cynicism.

With all your admiration for Carlyle and Thackeray, you will soon see the vein of cynicism which runs through both. The cynic is one of their *dramatis personæ*. They make it do duty on many occasions, as a waxwork figure is dressed for obvious purposes in different costumes every night. The former inveighs against shams, and the latter against snobs, until there is a little danger, at least, that their disciples should become indiscriminate in their censures on men and measures. Ruskin has imbibed the same spirit, but in him it remains an almost unconscious emotion, and it is at all times associated with such a passion for goodness and reality, that few of his admirers notice it, and those who do, are the first to forgive it.

If, then, this spirit exists in a mild shape in some of the loftiest realms of literature, we need not wonder to see it confronting the graver problems of religion. The attitude of what is called "unbelief" has much changed since the beginning of the century. Voltaire and his school, in the eighteenth century, poured out streams of wit against Christianity; Hume thought the subject

of miracle worthy of serious investigation and discussion. But an influential class of thinkers in our day hardly deign to notice these immense problems. They assume that they have been effectually disposed of, and that it is agreed among "intelligent" men that we cannot certainly know whether there is a God or not. Perhaps you have felt the eddying currents of this kind of thought. Remember that it is either conscious or unconscious cynicism. Whether supernatural religion be true or false, one thing is most certain—that it cannot be disposed of like a whiff of tobacco smoke. As far as the beliefs of man are concerned, it is a solid and substantial fact. What folly it is to treat it as a dream ; and none the less so, though folly should be dressed in wisdom's clothes ! It is the dog nature peeping out again, knocking over old china and porcelain and marble statuettes for the very fun of seeing them break. Yet if a dog only knew the value of these things he would pause. Chain up the dog that is in you, and seek the directness of a child and the largeness and sincerity of a true man.

PROVE, BUT HOLD.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PROVE, BUT HOLD.

THE human mind is a delicate instrument to work with. It may easily be blunted or cut in the wrong place if it is used on mistaken principles. One of these mistaken principles is the doctrine which is much emphasized by some writers—that your first duty toward truth or statements of truth is that of doubt. According to their own method, then, it is our duty to doubt the dictum which they so dogmatically lay down. We not only doubt it, but deny it. The mind cannot work properly and efficiently if it adopts this specious error at the outset of its inquiries. I believe that the truth which exists in this bold and false assertion is that a man ought to ask himself first whether he really believes what he professes to believe. This is a wholesome and a much-needed principle, and it would aid the thinker in coming to sound conclusions. Let him inquire into the nature of the grip which he has of

truth. Is he receiving it because thus and thus it is held by those whom he respects, or because with his own mind he is satisfied of its soundness? If he wants to begin with doubt, let him be sceptical about himself.

Some seem to think that the human mind is a nicely adjusted pair of scales; and that if you do not interfere with it, the balance will be evenly held between truth and error. The figure of speech is misleading. The mind ought to be like a sensitive and chemically prepared plate waiting to photograph the object before it. If the plate had consciousness, we might suppose it asking to be allowed to receive a correct impression; that is, it would have a bias towards what was true. So the human mind ought to have a bias towards what is simply and nakedly true. But beyond this it may be regarded as specially prepared to receive some impressions rather than others. It cannot accept facts regardless of their moral worth and of their spiritual meaning. The plate has, in other words, been made by the Creator sensitive toward the beautiful, the heroic, the Christian. Man interferes with this bias, and often introduces some other sensitive element, so that the mind is ready to receive deformity, badness, and the blurred outlines of atheism.

It is of the first importance, then, that you shake yourselves loose from the unscientific and sophistical maxim that your primary duty is to doubt. You cannot work properly as a mental student without a bias toward the true. Mere authority will not overawe you; but those who have investigated before you will surely leave behind beaten tracks which you may at first tread without much question. But there are so many of them! Are there? Keep men strictly to their own department, and you will not be confused by discordant voices. There is a central point where the lines meet, and as you look on the interlacing lines you are much perplexed. Follow them a little way and you find that they branch off in separate and distinct directions. If the scientific line is blocked, there are some others that are clear. If the danger signal is up on the ecclesiastical branch, you may yet perform a safe journey on the theological. Thus, for example, an eminent man of science may puzzle you very much by his religious utterances. Remember that a little child is often a greater authority on the subject of prayer than those who have never tried to pray. Follow the scientific inquirer, with a bias in his favour, as long as he deals with facts, and with facts which come naturally within his own

cognizance ; and if he be a Christian, as he often is, his evidence and experience are valuable also in the religious sphere. But if not, his science is the thing which he has tried and tested. Hold his testimony within the proper bounds, and do so with a bias in his favour as a truthful, honest man, and you are then allowing your mind to work on the right principles and within well-recognized limits. But if you meet his facts with an eternal doubt, you have a treadmill process before you, and I cannot congratulate you upon the method which you have chosen.

Apply these same principles to the highest truths of religion. Begin here, too, with taking much for granted. Every science has its axioms. You must begin by saying about something, "Let it be granted." I call this a bias. It may be denominated a foundation, a basis of mental action. The tight-rope dancer may be all very well in a way, for vulgar crowds to gaze at ; but for locomotion give me a solid yard of ground to start from. Now, whether you approach religion from the historical side as a set of facts to be recognized, or from the mental side as a set of beliefs to be received, or from the spiritual side as a set of experiences to be felt, you must set out with a candid resolve to receive what has already been

proved. Life is too short for you to investigate the whole of the problems involved in philosophy and in religion. You must take, in a large measure, the facts and precepts which are already to hand. It is altogether an unpractical thing to tell you to doubt everything before receiving it. Acting on such wild advice, you would receive little or nothing, simply because you would have no time to do so.

There is a vague idea that there must be something wrong in holding to what we have been taught from our childhood. A noble but mistaken impulse leads many young men and women to fly off at a tangent from all such early beliefs. They fly, in fact, to truths or errors, as the case may be, which they have never proved. The natural course for the mind to pursue is to receive with reverence what our parents teach us; but if we do so simply on their authority, we shall find that we shall neither hold our religious beliefs, nor will they hold us.

Our clear duty, then, about all truth, and especially about religious truth, is to prove it, that we may hold it. But, as we have shown, this proving is not a delving down to foundations which have already been laid. It is a practical thing and a process which any earnest mind can take up. The

tests, for example, of religious truth are found in the thousand and one circumstances of our daily life. Of course, if a young man has historic doubts or intellectual perplexities, these must be met by historic and intellectual evidence. But, even in such a case, the solution of difficulties will be immensely quickened by moral and spiritual means. By proving, some seem to mean exclusively the art of reading both sides. This is important. But I venture to think that the efforts and acts of the spirit are psychologically of supreme importance. A man solves physical difficulties by actual experiment. If he is told that he cannot move his right arm, he tries to move it, and is convinced according to the result. So if we are told that prayer is foolish, there is but one effectual solution, and that is to pray reverently and devoutly. It may be said that this is begging the question, and so it is mentally. We virtually say that the abstract point shall stand over for the present, that we will not argue the matter *à priori*; but that in religion, as in so many other things, we will make an experiment. Teetotallers rightly say to opponents, "Do not condemn our practice on physical grounds till you have made a fair, that is, a sufficiently lengthy experiment." The same line is legitimately pursued

in regard to personal religion. As to abstract religion and theology, the difficult questions have been fought out and applied a thousand times. But, apart from these, we say to any young inquirer, "Try a life thoroughly devoted to Christ; even though you may at present doubt His right to have authority over you, yet do, for a whole year, exactly what you know He would wish you to do; live a life of trust and prayer as far as your light leads you, and act in strict and constant accord with the will of Christ." Such is the experiment we propose in personal religion. It could not fail to be as interesting as it would be difficult. Dare you make it?

Now, when the conclusion is reached there is the duty left of holding it. Hold it publicly and in the open air. He is no true atheist who only says in his heart, "There is no God." Some secret doubt keeps him from proclaiming himself to society. The danger to the world lies in the fact that so many rush forward to proclaim convictions which they have never reached. But if a man has indeed proved a thing and experimented fairly upon it, then let him hold it.

The ultimate stage of your movement is to have and to hold. The proving is but a temporary process. It is the means, and possession is the

end. Do not linger too long on the road, forgetting the end of the journey. Who was it that said if God gave him the choice between truth and the search after it, he would prefer the latter? He was, to our thinking, in the wrong. The soul is not a mere athlete. Exercise is not its *raison d'être*; but attainment. No doubt it is better to search than to be filled with ennui. But the next foolish thing is to search without wishing or expecting to find. What a farce! The mind is not mocked by such delusive movements, as though it were a blind horse treading a circle for nothing. Hold! Clench the hand of your mind over what you have got, even though it be but a ball of ice. Better that it should melt at once, than that you should mistake it for some crystal. Prove all things, if you will; be ever of an inquiring mind, if so your bent is; but *cleave to that which is good*.

HOBBIES: THEIR USE AND
ABUSE.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOBBIES : THEIR USE AND ABUSE.

IN one of Charles Lamb's delightful essays, there is a description of a certain John Tipp, one of the familiar figures at the South Sea House. At the desk he was a very solid piece of humanity. "Thence all ideas that were purely ornamental were banished. You could not speak of anything romantic without rebuke. Politics were excluded. A newspaper was thought too refined and abstracted. The whole duty of man consisted in writing off dividend warrants." We introduce John Tipp to our readers, or rather remind them of one of whom they have, we hope, already read in the quaint and refreshing Essays of Elia, as an example of one who had a hobby. Lamb tells us that the fiddle relieved his vacant hours "He sang certainly with other notes than to the Orphean lyre. He did indeed scream and scrape most abominably."

In Hone's "Year Book" you will find a characteristic description of the hobby-horse used in the ancient morris-dances. This pasteboard animal may stand for the follies with which many seek to beguile their leisure hours. A hobby was a little horse, perhaps a favourite, and one, therefore, on which the owner often rode. Hence the word came to be applied to that which formed a favourite pursuit. And whatever may have been its past associations of folly, it is possible to use the word now in a serious sense.

The old idea still clings to it, however. Men may ride their hobby till they become bores. Their friends either avoid them, or else take good care to avoid their special subject. This is especially so with topics that have yet to gain a currency in the world's conversation and conviction. The best reforms are, in their inception, only the crotchets of a few. They have to be taken up by zealots and men of one idea. The hobby has to be ridden very hard. In such cases it would be well for reformers to have a kind of hobby within a hobby, a select and private circle of interests. This tends to widen and freshen the mind, and enables men to go through their self-chosen and often arduous toil without flagging. But with regard to hobbies, we must beware of making our-

selves social nuisances. We may import selfishness into our pastime-pursuits, and forget that others have subjects as dear to them as ours are to our own minds. If the fiddle can restrict its scraping sounds within the four walls of the chamber of the fiddler, well and good! But when screeching or even musical sounds penetrate a neighbour's house, he may naturally object. If you emigrate to the deserts of Sahara, you may choose your own whims and fancies without hindrance. But as you have elected to be a member of civilized society, you ought to be prepared to obey the unwritten laws of good behaviour. If you could see the faint smile of your friend when you mention your favourite subject, or the look of despair which comes over a relative who has heard you descant on the importance of Druidical remains a hundred times, you would, for the sake of a change, condescend now and then to discuss the weather of the past week. I should not like to hazard an opinion about the present latitude and longitude of the "ten tribes," or discuss the bi-metallic theory of coinage, but I hope you have no craze on these and other obscure subjects. The man who rides on one idea, as thin as the stick over which a child crosses its legs, makes himself ridiculous.

But the probabilities are that most people would

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be better for some good hobby. Hobbies are not taken in hand and patted on the neck as they should be. Most lives are sufficiently monotonous to make a little change desirable; and, instead of waiting for the fortnight's holiday in the summer, it would be well to have a subject that interests us all through the year. Woman has an endless variety of work and play connected with her needle. She may ply this for amusement while conversation is going on, or while a book is being read. It would be well to keep the lighter sort for these social occasions, and especially pieces of work intended for the poor or for the amusement of children. The dressing of a doll may afford a much-needed rest to the brain of a hard-worked young woman. The preparations for a bazaar are not to be despised from this point of view. If the needle be used all day, the hobby should be chosen in some other direction. In any case, it should lift a man entirely out of his own ordinary work. A minister of religion found his hobby in the art of book-binding. Many of the "cloth" are diligent imitators and worthy descendants of the "grand old gardener." Statesmen turn aside from dusty Acts of Parliaments, dry precedents, dreary speeches, and exciting party divisions, and find refreshment in Homeric studies or in novel-writing.

Michael Angelo wrote some sonnets, and Dante is said to have once painted the face of an angel. Browning makes an exquisite use of these facts in dedicating his "Men and Women" to his wife in a poem entitled "One Word More." What I want to point out is that no man's daily avocation, however noble, fully satisfies mind and body. We become dull if we do not get out of our common ruts. Milton will be remembered as a poet, but he was also a good musician, and found refreshment at the key-board of his organ. Sir Thomas More was a great lawyer, and a memorable literary man; but he took delight in having a kind of farmyard of animals round his house. Horace delighted to turn from his versification to his farm in the country, where he could talk with the ploughboy and the vine-dresser. Cicero enjoyed political struggle, but he went with keen relish to the quiet seclusion of his house at Tusculum, where, amid his books and in rustic walks, he could forget the dust and heat of Rome. William, Prince of Orange, was devoted to his royal duties; but nothing pleased him more than to leap into the saddle and follow the hounds. George Herbert was a model country parson; but he liked to go to Salisbury once a week for the solace of a little music. Many a minister of religion has followed the "gentle craft"

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of Izaak Walton, much to his own benefit, and to that of his congregation.

By a hobby, however, we understand an amusement which has a strain of serious purpose in it. It has just a tinge of work and of dignity in it; otherwise it would not satisfy the man. And, on the whole, the pursuit of some such purpose is to be recommended. To make a model ship, or to carve out of cork a model of some beautiful cathedral, or to build a little greenhouse in the back-yard, or to cultivate a few window plants—these simple things often tend to keep the mind sweet. But you may probably wish to do more than this. I have known busy men to make most remarkable and interesting collections through working during a series of years at a hobby. A fine series of dried ferns, collections of coins, of stamps, of fossils, of shells, of autographs, of butterflies, or of stuffed birds are made in this way. The collection of old books may become a fine passion, but it is an expensive one. It is best to select one author, and to look for early editions of his works. Working with the microscope, or indeed with any scientific apparatus, affords endless amusement.

Many throw their spare energies into some philanthropic or religious movement. They become secretaries or committee men, and set about

converting society to their views. The world is greatly indebted to all such workers. Our Sunday schools and other institutions of this kind are most efficiently carried on, when we have men and women who throw their whole heart into their support. Such work ought, however, *not* to be regarded from the low standpoint of a mere hobby. It yields all the pleasure of a hobby, and also the loftier delight of doing some direct good to the mind and character of the community.

It is an old saying that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." The loafers about society, the hangers-on, the intellectual corner-men, the moral vagabonds (*i.e.* wanderers), and the ne'er-do-wells are found among those who have no hobbies. If a man has no purpose within him, he becomes an easy prey to the force of external circumstances. When the mind is not intent on something good, it is easily drawn off to something bad. Let comrades laugh at your fad! You will have the advantage over them by and-by. Results will show who is wiser—the man who shuffles through the world, living from hand to mouth, or the man with a hobby. I hope that you will have a hobby, and that it will be one of which you will have no cause to be ashamed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS
LIFE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS LIFE.

THE essential and unchangeable element of all business, both ancient and modern, is barter. In this respect we do not differ from the rudest savages. Our barter is more complicated, has to do with vastly more articles, and is facilitated by our currency ; but, like the trade of the earliest nations, it is still the exchange of one product of industry for another. If we want specimens of the old jog-trot methods of barter, we have only to go through the bazaars of Egypt, where many hours are spent in coming to terms about the simplest transaction. If we want specimens of the modern way, let us turn into a stock-broker's office where a telegram arrives ordering £50,000 of stock. In order to acquit yourselves well in this modern market, you should take notes of the characteristics of the world in which you will have to do your buying and selling.

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The market is very much crowded. There are plenty of sellers, plenty of buyers, and plenty of goods to be sold. Business is not now the leisurely old-fashioned kind of exchange which it once was. There is hardly time for a pinch of snuff in the pauses of conversation, and remarks on the state of the weather are considered superfluous. It is to be hoped that the pernicious habit of adjourning to the nearest publichouse to discuss a bargain over glasses of ale is passing away. Such slow methods are not favoured. This change is deprecated by many; but, on the whole, it is a good one. It is better to be briskly engaged in work than to dawdle through the day's engagements. When a thing can be done in six words, why waste sixty? The danger is that we may try to crowd too much into business hours, and waste nervous energy and ruin health.

But whether the change is for the better or for the worse, it is a fact, and should be looked in the face. Business now means keener competition with others than it once did. Monopoly has received its death-blow. Free trade has made all the nations our competitors. The tradesman must be on the alert. He cannot afford to be idle or unconcerned. He is not in a position to keep incompetent hands in his establishment. The new state of things is a call to all to better themselves.

There is a new and a fierce struggle for existence, in which the weak, the incompetent, and the indolent must go to the wall. Energy is the first necessity in a business life, whatever the position which is filled. The times call loudly for competent men.

If this be so, business education is a prime necessity. How far the elements of this education could be introduced at school, both among boys and girls, is a question well worthy of consideration among reformers. Of course all school education is a preparation more or less direct for the shop and the office. Yet the preparation is too abstract. If boys could play at shop; if they could keep imaginary ledgers; if they could draw, accept, and discount bills on one another, and go through a few of the ordinary processes of common commercial life, they would not find the world so strange to them when they first enter upon it. When however that world is entered upon, the real education begins. It is by remembering this that a young man prepares himself for the actual contest of life. Some seem to think that business methods will soak through the pores of their skin. But these methods are as hard to learn as the propositions of Euclid, and the mind should be thoroughly given to the process. The apprentice

system is not so common as it once was. But every beginner ought to regard himself as an apprentice, and give himself to learn with great zest all the details of his trade or profession. The shop or office is to him what the college is to the young clergyman or teacher, and what the hospital is to the young doctor. The competition of modern life necessitates business competence.

The crowded state of the labour market suggests that new opportunities are continually occurring for fresh labourers. Where so many are needed, and where so many new wants are being felt, none need despair of occupation. At first the crowds about us seem to force an opposite consideration on us. They may make us feel that there is no room for our labour. But these crowds must live in some way, and must have their necessities and luxuries supplied largely by the industry of others. In one respect, therefore, they are not so much our competitors as our possible customers. And if we widen our view and remember that the world is, after all, not so very large, we shall see doors opening to other lands through which we may safely and happily pass. Many young couples have been full of thankfulness that they left the shores of England for countries and colonies where there was more elbow-room. Emigration, pru-

dently conducted, is a possible cure for many of our social difficulties. Let the idle remember that they will be miserable and burdensome in any land. The honest and industrious may well consider whether, if work fails them in the "old country," it would not be well to turn their thoughts and steps to another shore. Opportunity is a characteristic of the present busy age.

The cost of living and of carrying on business has very much increased. Retail shopkeepers and manufacturers on a small scale have an advantage. In Birmingham a man can readily become a manufacturer. He has but to rent a floor, through which a strap, connected with a steam-engine, passes, and he can commence manufacturing on his own account. If he lives near his workshop, has a frugal wife, and is sober and industrious, he is pretty sure to get on. So, too, with a small tradesman. If he has a cash custom and few expenses, and lives on the premises, he has the chance of making a little money. But modern habits are beginning to tell. Cheap locomotion and the power of steam have expanded our towns and cities, and very often the tradesman has two establishments to keep up: the one where his business is carried on, and the one where his family resides. Contrast with this the case of Milton's father, who,

though a prosperous lawyer, lived in Bread Street, Cheapside; the office being on the ground floor, and the family, I suspect, grouping themselves in the evening round the organ in a back room, or in one on the first floor. The result of this economy was that Mr. Milton could afford to give his son a Cambridge education, to send him abroad, and afterwards to buy a snug estate at Horton, where he retired to enjoy his *otium cum dignitate*.

How far the *sight* of immense streams of men pouring in and out of the city leads us to suppose that we live in a busier age than formerly, is a thing we seldom ask. Formerly men woke up, dressed, had breakfast, and went downstairs to their work. There was no fuss. There were no screeching trains, no overloaded omnibuses, no dog-carts and neat little broughams. There was simply a waking up and a setting to the business of the day. Our method is, no doubt, a necessity brought about by the enormous increase of our population. But it is in some elements more costly. You have to embark more capital now than formerly, if you would be tolerably successful. The most natural thing for men to do is that which they often neglect to do, viz. to sit down and count the cost.

This leads to another point. There is more cost of brain now than formerly. More business is

done by the one man ; that is, more separate transactions pass through his brain. If this quantity is not excessive, it does not necessarily bring about any injurious effects. The repair of nerve tissue is more rapid than the waste. But the demands made should lead men to be very careful that while life's duties are pulling down the tissues, life's habits are building them up. Our fathers had plenty of leisure to dine. In this simple fact lay a large amount of their solid power. We make a rush at our work, and put off eating till it is all over. As a consequence the body falls below par, or habits of tippling are formed. It is not the fast motion which kills, but the injudicious method of cramming work into a short space and of making rushes at duty that tells on the constitution. It is not the express train which endangers the nervous system, for this, when moderately used, is not half so wearing as the old stage coach. Trying to catch trains ; swallowing a sandwich, instead of taking a leisurely meal ; and, worse still, trusting to the stimulating effect of a glass of sherry on an empty stomach—these are the things which would shatter the best physique. There is very much cant talked about the pace of modern life. If our work is hard and earnest, so much the better for us. Hard workers are not the first to grumble at the speed of the

world, but irregular ones. What railways have taught us is the necessity of punctuality and of method ; but this is the last lesson which is learnt by large numbers. They are always late, and therefore always in a hurry. Their normal attitude is that of a man trying to catch a train. Without method, without forethought, without a right estimate of the value of minutes, life is spent in being out of breath. We can accommodate ourselves to the pace of modern life by method, by punctuality, and by earnestness.

There is, however, one very important element of difficulty introduced into the business man's life by our express pace. It is that he is compelled to make up his mind very quickly. Whether a man be a buyer or a seller, he has not much time to spare. Ladies seem to take a long time to do their shopping ; but I suspect our great-grandmothers went to work more slowly. There are large numbers of ladies who feel that life is intended for something higher than the choice of a new ribbon, and they cannot brook delays on the part of shopkeepers. Shopmen have to study the wants of their customers by very rapid intuitions, and if they make frequent mistakes in reading character they are sure to be the losers. Buyers and sellers on a large scale have to send their minds very

swiftly through a large number of complicated calculations in a very short space of time. The rapidity of the process tells in the course of years. Not only has the quality of the article to be judged, but the future and present conditions of the market, the demands of retailers, the wants of the public, have all to be taken into account. We are brought round then to our old point, namely, that a well-trained judgment is absolutely necessary for success in business. A series of mistakes will lead to ruin ; a series of sound judgments will lead to fortune. It seems as though there is much luck in business ; but there is not much. The man who makes a good thing more than once may be credited with shrewdness. Trust nothing to luck, but have confidence in a good head. Consider your education just begun when you have started in life, and do not be too proud to learn the slightest thing that has to do with your trade or profession.

Combination and co-operation are marked characteristics of modern trade. They open out too wide a subject to be treated here. I refer to them mainly to urge on young men a study of the main elements of political economy. Working men sometimes fancy that trades-unions ought to turn England into a paradise. All that such organizations ought to do, and, in the long run,

can do, is to give the workers the advantage of the labour market when it is in their favour. Trades unions protect the rights of working men. But what are those rights? Only the market value of their labour. Any attempt to force wages above this level will only recoil on themselves. And when this attempt involves a strike, and a consequent loss to the wage fund, the game is, in most cases, not worth the candle; or if, on the other hand, masters try to force down wages below the market standard, they will burn their fingers. Arbitrators who have a thorough knowledge of what is passing in the mercantile world, and whose minds are as impartial as those of judges, are a necessity of modern trade, if England is to hold her own in international competition. It would be well both for masters and men to know what combinations can, and what they cannot, do. If working men were to extend the co-operative principle among themselves, and combine their savings by forming joint stock companies, they would know more about the losses of the capitalist, as well as about his gains. In this direction there is much to be done.

In former times guilds were constituted in order to preserve monopolies; now they are entered upon in order to break them down. The co-operative

stores form a marked feature of business life. Tradesmen have made a great outcry against them ; but what is the secret of their success? Cash payment. Cash with the order, or cash over the counter. As a consequence, there are no books to be kept, and, above all, there are no bad debts, and there is no loss of capital through long credit. It is astonishing how difficult many tradesmen find it to make their customers pay cash. Grocer, baker, butcher, fishmonger, bookseller, bootmaker—who is there among them all that will wait for the money at the door when the goods are delivered? If they cannot trust their men, let them get honest ones. The remedy is in their own hands. They could, most of them, do a ready-money trade if they chose ; and they would then leave the doubtful customers, the bad debts, the long credits, to those of their fellow tradesmen who, afraid to offend the few, are prepared to make the many suffer.

AMUSEMENTS AND RECREATION.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AMUSEMENTS AND RECREATION.

AMUSEMENT is a passing of the time without thinking. Recreation is the recovery of a lost tone to body and mind by some change. There may be a time when it is right and necessary to be absolutely without thought—to lie on one's back, as it were, and gaze on the blue summer sky. If this is continued too long it does not recreate. And as life was given for duty, it becomes a question which each man has to answer as to how far we may allow ourselves to indulge in amusements.

He who could write the history of amusements from the first days of man till now, would throw an immense light ^{on} some of the most important problems. The holidays of the Greek and Roman worlds marked off the early Christians as a distinct people. The Christians did not attend the shows, the fights in the circus, the athletic games, the theatres, and the public baths. Some think that

they took an exaggerated view of the vices mixed up with some of these pastimes; but it seems certain that so much sin and frivolity were associated with them, that they could not well be blamed for abstaining from them. It must have been a hard thing, beneath the blue sky of Italy, or in the balmy air of Greece and Asia Minor, to abstain from pleasures; but the duty seemed stern and undoubted.

Asceticism was, no doubt, partly the product of the conditions under which Christianity made its start in the world. Men and women thought that they served God best, not only by separating themselves from unholy pleasures, but even from holy ones. The extreme theory that all matter was essentially evil was held by many, and their great endeavour was to purge themselves from all contact with the physical. Hermits and devotees, like Simon Stylites, were regarded by a gaping multitude as the true types of the Christian life. Then came the age of monasticism. But in the mean while the gospel had been gradually elevating the tone of society, and infusing a purer morality into its very pastimes. And our own difficulties arise in a large measure from the fact that things in themselves pure and good may become means of leading us away from the loftiest ideal of life.

How to use without abusing good things is the problem we have to solve.

Christianity is opposed to asceticism. It teaches that God made the world and man's body, and Christ has "cleansed all meats." The gifts of God are physical as well as spiritual. We are called upon to be thankful for meat, drink, and clothing. God created the splendour of the material universe, and has given man an eye and a heart to appreciate what He has made. We are not, therefore, to take our pleasures by stealth, but in the very sight of God Himself. The solemnity, verging on melancholy, of some good people is not a true reflection of the joy of God's creation, and is not an embodiment of His purpose in making man.

The attitude of religious people has been, however, often either purposely or unconsciously misrepresented. They have claimed the liberty of abstaining from many very popular amusements, and they have felt impelled to warn others of what they conceived to be their dangerous character. This has given affront to many persons; and a social despotism has been set up in favour of sports which it was considered a very ungentlemanly action to decry. It was once the mark of ill breeding not to drink a bottle of port

at a friend's dinner-table. To begin a protest against such tyranny required some amount of moral courage. But as in the case of total abstinence, so in refraining from the accepted customs of "society," men have indicated their right to think and choose for themselves. Men are not to be branded as fanatics because they decline to frequent the race-course and the ball-room.

The delicate point arises when we begin to lay down our own abstinence as a rule for others. We may be setting up another kind of social despotism instead of the one which we have just overthrown. And yet it is the duty of every man by argument and persuasion to seek to mould social habits according to his own views of what is morally wholesome. Without becoming a pope he may try to be a leader. Christian people, above all, are bound to watch the results of popular pleasures on character and conduct, and boldly to make known the convictions which they have been led to adopt. It is good for public morality that such watchfulness should be exercised; and it is only as there is the free play of opinion that right conclusions can be reached in things that relate to the social life of our country. There is **much** bigotry on points like these on the part of those who are the first to assume the name of liberal

thinkers. The *precisian* has as good a right to a public hearing, especially before the young, as the *latitudinarian*. It would be well not to dismiss the former from our presence without weighing his arguments, under the delusive idea that we are showing "breadth of view" and "liberality of thought."

Kingsley cannot fairly be taxed with being either narrow, fanatical, or illiberal. In his book on "Plays and Puritans," he has vindicated the character of the Puritans from the gross and unfair attacks which have been made upon them. "Give a dog a bad name——" Most writers previous to the present generation have united, no doubt with perfect sincerity, to give utterly erroneous views of Puritanism. And it is still a popular notion that the Puritans were opposed to all joy, laughter, games, and, in fact, to all the recreations of life. Walter Scott has depicted the sour, fanatical, and melancholy men whose types were to be met with in the stern struggles of the seventeenth century. But these were not fair specimens of the Puritan party. Our modern writers are reversing the older judgments which England had formed on this matter. Halley's "Puritanism in Lancashire," Green's "Short History of the English People," and other able works that might be named have enabled us to look into the homes of the Puritans,

and to find how full of healthy joy they were. We can see again the pleasantries which hovered about the glowing hearth, the smooth lawns where the men indulged in quoits, the sons coming in from their field sports, the daughters cultivating their literary tastes—some, like Milton's father, waking symphonies at the organ; and we can hear many a merry bit of wit resounding its laughter through the smoke-stained rafters.

The historical study of a subject like the present is extremely valuable, because it tends to give us sobriety of judgment. We are able to see why these men acted as they did. The earnestness of their times compelled them to take a side. The dramatic literature of their day shows it to have been impossible for them to have taken their wives and daughters to the playhouse. And before we scorn or libel them, we should try to appreciate the forces of evil with which they had to contend. Who is now the gentleman? Who would be now received into good society? The Cavalier with his essenced curls, his long sword, his ruffles, his embroidered garments, and his splendid jewellery? Or the Puritan with his sober dress, his moderation in eating and drinking, his wholesomeness of speech, and his simple manners? Truly the whirligig of time brings its own revenges.

The amusements of modern times are not so rough and brutal, nor so immoral, as those against which the Puritans protested. They have improved with the advancing moral tone of English society. And some come at once to the rash conclusion that Christian young men and women may, therefore, patronize them to their hearts' content. Let us look at the question in a practical light. We do not take our amusements, as a rule, alone. They are social, and yet they may be private. Friends meet together, games are started, music is played, topics of conversation are started, albums are turned over, and a meal is eaten together. Is there not room for improvement in such gatherings? They cannot be considered successful if they have not really refreshed the people who have been brought together. It may well tax and call forth the ingenuity of young people to devise better methods of passing an evening. Let them discover methods of ventilating rooms without draughts, so that guests shall not be poisoned by bad air. Let them teach us how to avoid late hours, luxurious eating and drinking, the absolute necessity of driving to the place of entertainment ; and let them find out how to obtain the maximum of innocent pleasure with the minimum of expense ; and they will have done

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much to lighten the lives of the lower middle classes of this country. We only need a few bold spirits to lead the way, and the rest would soon follow.

But for the most part the great bulk of the people will be left to the mercy of public provision. Many have no homes of their own, and many others who have homes find it difficult to arrange for even little festal occasions. The caterer for the public will always have a large constituency to which to appeal. Probably Christian people could do very much more than they imagine to provide healthy and elevating recreation for the people. Our places of worship might be more frequently employed during the week to improve the intellectual condition of the masses. In the mean while, public-houses and gin-palaces stand at the street corners ; billiard-rooms are crowded by young men ; music-halls, with bad music, vulgar buffoonery, and stupid jokes, are attractive ; while many of the theatres, with their pasteboard and meretricious ornamentation, and silly or sensational dramas, never seem to pall on the depraved taste of the public. * Other people find amusement in dancing academies, at concerts, in listening to oratorios or operas, and in the bazaars, fancy fairs, skating rinks, dioramas, and waxworks which abound in large towns.

Now, looking at some of these from a common-sense point of view, the following reflections occur to us. They take up a great deal of time ; they cost much money ; they do not always recreate ; they do not make a man more fit for business ; and round some of them there cling very bad associations. A few simple, straightforward questions will help any ingenuous young man to find out his duty in relation to them. Can you afford the time which they cost ? If not, do not go. Can you afford the money which they cost ? If not, do not go. Do they lead you to gamble ? If so, do not go. How much do you spend on books and on religion ? How much do you put away in the bank ? Many young men have been ruined financially by their pleasures. Then, again, you have to go to business ; and if these pastimes have recreated you, you ought to go with a spring and a bound to your new day's duty. Is it so ? Is there no languor, no dizziness, no depression, no want of energy ? Do you rob your master or yourself of strength ? And further, you have often prayed, "Lead me not into temptation." Did you feel your virtue strung up by the gay and motley throng of the other evening ? You remember the kind of company, the drinking, the flashy song, the late hour, the acquaintances you

might have formed which shall be nameless, and the moral atmosphere. I will not ask you whether you are the better for it, but whether you are not the worse for it. And while you were there, a good woman, a wife or a mother, was praying for you. And the following Sunday you went to your place of worship and prayed, "Lead us not into temptation." Why do you go? Can you touch fire and not be burned? Can you breathe a polluted atmosphere and not be tainted? From a common-sense point of view young men are not reasonable if they read bad books, go into bad company, put themselves in the way of temptation, spend more time, strength, and money than they can afford, and then expect to remain men of lofty integrity, of spotless character, and of good credit. They tempt temptation itself, and sooner or later they must fall.

But it will be said by some readers, "You have offered no guidance about the amusements which are harmless, nor have you given us a catalogue of amusements which are innocent." No! for I am not a pope. The right or wrong of pleasures has to be settled by every man's conscience, and it can only be rightly settled when a man has a Christian conscience. It is an injurious thing to our moral nature to be ever turning to books and

men for what should be given us by our own moral sense. Unless we exercise our own conscience in these matters, we shall soon have none left to exercise. The spiritual perception will grow dull and dark. It will make a man of us to decide these questions for ourselves, getting of course all the light that good people can give us, if only we resolutely act the part of self-denial in all doubtful cases. One consideration will always help us, namely, that pleasures are not the main end of living, and that we need not therefore spend our whole mental energy in passing the bye-laws of our life's conduct. The pole-star of duty will generally guide us away from injurious, and direct us toward beneficial amusements.

But the root of all wise solution of these minor difficulties of life is that the man himself should be right. We are apt to be ever asking the relations of this or the other *thing* to right or to religion. The true problem is the relation of *man* to right and religion. Nothing will stead us here but loyalty to Christ as our Divine Master. If we feel that He has the right to all our hours, all our strength, all our money, all our duties, we shall willingly give ourselves to please Him in all the pleasures we take. No man is in a right mental condition to consider the casuistry of recreation on

the highest ground until he has surrendered himself to Christ. It is the same with many other questions, 'e.g. the keeping of the Sunday, the nature of the Bible, the lawfulness of certain kinds of friendship, our relations to what is called modern thought. No man can solve these, till he has first determined what shall be his personal relations to Christ. If you ask me whether it is right to go to this place or to stay away from that, I must press on you the query, "Are you yet a Christian?" By what law do you live? The law of Christ permits pleasures, but it does not allow them to dominate the mind, to soak into the affections, to absorb the emotions, to draw the energies away from good works. Your amusements should be in the highest sense recreations.

PATRIOTISM, FALSE AND TRUE.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

PATRIOTISM, FALSE AND TRUE.

IT is a good thing to see a draper or a grocer taking part in public life. The same remark applies to the heir of a large estate. Foxes, hounds, and horses are not essentially nobler than yards of tape and pounds of sugar. If a man wants to live a selfish life, what matters it if he does so behind a shop counter, or behind a pack of dogs? The love of country does at least this good to a man: it gives him a soul above his common work. Where our common work is in itself noble, the temptation to neglect civic duty becomes strong. Doctors, artists, literary men, and clergymen often excuse themselves from the duties of patriotism on the ground that they have other and higher things to do. A little practical help in keeping the machinery of local or imperial government right would, however, be of great service to such total abstainers as these. Every man is the

better for a well-balanced life. The best should not hinder the good.

There is very much inexcusable apathy among all classes in reference to public life. The growth of large towns and cities sends vast numbers away from the centres of activity. The newspapers penetrate, but organizations are sometimes wanting; and when these are present, men say that the evenings find them too tired to take much part in their working. But none of these causes ought to apply to energetic young men. The work of the day does not leave them too jaded for cricket, the river, lawn-tennis, billiards, and other muscular amusements; why should they shrink from a little exertion in aid of their country? There is no reason but that of selfishness.

In order to take an interest in one's country, we must begin by taking an interest in our own locality. Patriotism is too vague a term. We cannot at first hang any specific duties to the word. Some prefer to allow its vagueness to remain, so that they may be excused from arduous thought or action. Many a young man can recite Shakespeare's eulogium on charity who has never given a shilling to any good cause. And so, too, many are ready to throw up their caps and shout for their country who have never yet contributed

to its taxes or spent one hour in mastering its history. We have to begin at our own locality, and seek to sustain a healthy interest in our own special ward, district, or town. It is true that such an interest will lay us open to the charge of being parochial, provincial, and narrow. This charge can only be sustained if we remain too much engrossed with our own particular affairs. But it will be found that each little part of the country is a microcosm of the whole ; and when you have learned the play of principles and passions on a small scale, you will the more easily understand them on a large one. It is not possible to get up much enthusiasm about an election for poor-law guardians, and yet a knowledge of their functions, and an interest in the way they do their work may not be useless to you as a preparation for larger matters.

It is only given to the few to be speakers and leaders. If any one aspires to this position, let him begin early. It is always an advantage to be able to express thoughts in clear idiomatic English before an audience. But this facility is sorely hindered by self-consciousness. Yet there is no reason why the majority of men should not be able to say what they mean when speaking to a meeting. There are many business positions where

such a capacity is of great value. The English, as a rule, are poor speakers. They leave this part of the public business of life to professionals. It is painful to hear a mayor, a director, the mover of a resolution at a town's meeting, stumbling through half-broken sentences which would disgrace a schoolboy. A fair amount of facility in public speech may be obtained by early practice. I have heard men say who have contested parliamentary or ward constituencies, where they had to attend a large number of meetings, that though they hesitated and halted at first, they soon found their sea-legs, and got on comfortably before the campaign was half over. It was practice that helped them.

But patriotism has to be put into force in other ways than through public speech. Speakers require an audience, and the audience must have a stock of political ideas and feelings common with those who address them. What is needed first is that we should have a due conception, though not an exaggerated one, of the importance of politics. Our country is fashioned in a larger measure than we suppose by the principles which guide the legislature and the executive government. The science of government is far-reaching in its applications. Whether we like it or not, it touches not only the physical welfare of

the people, but also their morals and their religion. We may say with vehemence that people cannot be made moral by an Act of Parliament; but as far as morals and religion show themselves in overt acts, legislation has much to do with them. The indirect effects of legislation are in these regions often more important than the direct. Public opinion is a mighty factor in the nation's well-being or ill-being; and Parliament serves to focus this great force. If you take a statesman's life, and seek to find out the Acts of Parliament he has been instrumental in passing, you will perhaps be surprised to find that they are so few. You will then wonder, perhaps, how it was he became so powerful; and you will discover that he was constantly giving a tone and colouring to public thought—that he was, in other words, seeking to form a policy for a great people; and this fact will account for his power. And thus, too, it is with the lesser lights. They all do their part in the enlightening or darkening of the nation's mind. Politics are powerful because they form the engine for expressing the thoughts and for transacting the business of the country.

This engine is a vast and complicated machine and we all have something to do with its construction. It is only a rivet of thought, or only one bolt

of voting power, that you can put in ; but the total strength is made up of these single bolts and rivets. And if you trace back this huge and manifold engine to its constructive elements, you will find that it begins to exist in the thoughts of the people at large. What people think is, after all, the first slender scaffolding, round which and within which the stable erection is built. Let them think long enough, and then feel strongly enough, and they do but wait the leader to finish the process by action.

Patriotism is noble thought about our country, sustained by righteous feeling and expressed in wise action. Cold thinkers are not patriots, however righteous their thoughts may be ; nor are fuming enthusiasts ; nor are foolish busybodies. The three elements of thought, feeling, and action, must all combine in order to make a good patriot. How far men ought to engage in practical politics must be determined by circumstances. But the least that a man can do is to record his vote. A vote is often regarded merely as a right ; but every right involves a duty. If householders have the right of the franchise they are responsible to God and their country for its exercise. It is humiliating to see how necessary it is to drive, cajole, or persuade men to go to the poll. Canvassing is

deference paid to the indolence of human nature. The time will surely come when candidates for public life will feel themselves dishonoured by stooping to ask for one single vote. Let them fairly and fully state their principles, if they have any, and then abide by the consequences. We sadly need a law to compel men to record their votes. Those who feel it difficult to decide between two candidates might be allowed to put a blank paper into the ballot box; but, unless under stress of illness or absence from home, all voters might well be compelled to show at least the little bit of patriotism involved in going to the poll. Fines on absentees would help to pay the fair expenses of the election. What, however, is needed is such a deep sense of political responsibility that no legislation in this direction would be needed. In a country like ours, where the citizens are exempted from military service, they ought to be willing to sacrifice the time necessary to the record of their opinions.

But one of the great drawbacks to a healthy public life is that thousands have no opinions to record. They are so absorbed in the very practical question as to how to get bread, that they have no time to look up from their own narrow ruts. Yet these are days when political information of the

most important nature can easily be obtained by all classes. It is the favourite pastime of some to inveigh against the lies and misstatements of the newspapers; but these organs of public opinion are, for the most part, fountains of influence, without which our civilized life would be an impossibility. There is some superstition, it is true, about a large number of readers. The mighty "we" leaves an overpowering and blinding impression on their minds. Could they see the editor himself turning up his dictionaries and encyclopædias for information, they would not tremble at the big words and high-sounding phrases of the leading article. But when all allowances are made, there are few greater helps to a sound patriotism than a healthy organ of public opinion. I have often thought, however, that men are sadly in need of directions as to how to read a newspaper. It is the queerest mixture in literature; and the mind of a City man, after he has read his morning paper, would, if we could see it, present an amusing mass of trifles. Selection is necessary to a wise use of the daily journal. A glance over advertisements, law reports, police news, murder cases, and atrocities is enough. A summary of parliamentary proceedings is all that numbers have time to get through. The leaders ought to be aids to reflection. We need

not quarrel with a paper because it does not echo all our sentiments.

But we have certainly to make up our minds as to the principles on which we wish to see our country governed. In this matter we cannot dispense with the influence of birth and education ; but we can see to it that our principles shall be held with freedom from petty prejudices and personal animosities ; and this freedom can only be attained by a regard on our part to morals and history. Some deny, indeed, that morals can have anything to do with politics. They hold that the will of the powerful should be the paramount consideration in all affairs of State. It never occurs to them that a multitude of the people may be in the wrong as certainly as one man may be ; and that, if so, the consequences are likely to be much more disastrous. We might as well worship the wind as bow down before the wishes of either governors or governed, apart from the rightness or wrongness of those desires. It is much easier for nations to go publicly and emphatically wrong than for individuals, because when an evil course is once begun it is assisted forward by the power of sympathy and by insensibility to responsibility. There is no region of conduct, therefore, where we need to be more on our guard against the inroads of

immorality and cynicism than in public affairs. The constant application of every deed done in the name of England to Christian teaching is our only safeguard. It is no true patriotism to cry up our own country, whether right or wrong. The true patriot has sometimes to act the part of Jeremiah when he advocated an unpopular course. The law of God is paramount. It should settle questions of national honour and dishonour, of peace and war, of glory and shame, of prosperity and adversity.

Another ruling idea essential to patriotism is that the country is for the people, and for all the people. There are classes, each with its own important functions in the formation of public life. But it is no uncommon thing to set up a sort of imaginative idol called "our country," and to fall down before it regardless of the fact that England has been made to sustain and make happy Englishmen. No State is in a satisfactory condition where large portions of its population are discontented and miserable. The comfortable classes will generally take care of themselves. They need to know that their own prosperity is bound up with the condition of the uncomfortable classes. And even if it were not so, it would be their duty to advocate such social reforms and legislative enactments as would tend to raise men

in the moral scale. The working out of this idea opens up enormous possibilities of noble service to young men. Patriotism means hard, unpaid work in the service of the people. There may be, and ought to be, salaries attached to some parts of this service ; but it is what is done out of enthusiasm and delight that constitutes the love of country.

In order to have an accurate knowledge of our country's bearings, we must know a little bit, at least, of its history. Practical life corrects over-theorizing. But the knowledge of the practical should not be confined to the present ; it should seek its information also from the past. The State, as it exists now, is the resultant of complicated and combined forces—forces which we call historic events, or battles, or crises, or social upheavals, or efforts at reform. Many things seem grotesque or superfluous, like the buttons at the back of a man's frock-coat, till we know their history. Whig and Tory, Liberal and Conservative, seem to be playing a game at chess, till we see that each party inherits great traditions, and is governed by important principles. English politics seem at times to the superficial observer to be a mere struggle for place. But a glance backward in history will show how combinations have been welded, moulded, dissipated, and re-made under the ceaseless play of

aristocratic and democratic principles. Action and reaction constantly show themselves in the tide of English political progress. There has been a constant reaching forward, from the days of King John to our own time, after self-government. The problem of the past has been how to discover wise governors for the people, and to maintain freedom. The problem of the future will be the more difficult one of allowing the people to govern themselves, and yet to maintain freedom. The loud tramp of democracy which frightened Burke, and which drew from Carlyle many a sentence of splendid and angry declamation, cannot be interpreted by shrieks. It must be met with courage and intelligence, and, above all, be prepared for by all thoughtful patriots. Great and even sanguinary experiments have been made in the past. Cromwell succeeded in his main efforts, though his success led apparently to reaction. His battle settled, however, the question of king *versus* people; and whenever it arose, again, the people always gained the day in the long run. And thus every constitutional question which arises, or is likely to arise, receives solution, partial or total, from the history of the past. The Liberal may well, therefore, temper his reforming zeal by a dip into the cool bath of precedents; and the Con-

servative may well rouse himself from political quiescence by remembering that, after all, England is a country of progress toward a larger liberty and a firmer stability.

Some affect to be good patriots by indifference to party ties. They are neither Liberal nor Conservative, and often they are, in their own eyes, very superior and thoughtful people. They either possess or affect a remoteness from common passions which they suppose to be very charming. Yet they do not reflect that there can be no merit in not having political passion stirred, when they have none to stir. Such persons have an intense dislike to the vulgar herd. They find that they cannot move the people ; but they do not suspect the real reason, namely, their inability to be moved by the people. Many political questions must be discussed and decided on party lines, so long as men are creatures of emotion and lovers of principle ; and, with all the disadvantages of party conflict, it is for the benefit of the nation that this should be so. For party government has this enormous advantage, one which overweighs every drawback—that it fixes responsibility on men and combinations of men. Party lines are continually dissolving as opinions change and old questions are settled ; but new ones are as speedily reformed. The nation

gets to know the men on whom it must rely to carry out its will, and to these men it attaches the honour of success or the blame of failure. For the more speedy formation of public opinion, and for the swifter execution of the national will, party divisions are a great necessity. There will occasionally be subjects of such supreme, vital, and universal importance that all differences will melt away ; but, for the most part, the common duties of patriotism will have to be performed in combination with those who share the same opinions and aspirations as ourselves. In the brave days of old we are told that

“ None was for a party,
But all for the State.”

This is a little bit of poetical romance. Looking at the practical exigencies of our country, we must say that

“ All are for a party
Who work for the State.”

One word more. We are profoundly convinced that the moral and religious condition of the people is the main thing. Many who are not eager politicians are, however, indirectly doing most important political work by raising the intellectual and spiritual condition of the population. Labour like this does not make a noise like that

which often accompanies elections and public meetings, but its silence is mighty for good. It is a happy thing when these lines of influence, moral, religious, and political, combine in one man. But if we must choose, give us as the type of a true patriot one who spends his time and strength in the social and spiritual elevation of his countrymen.

WOMANLINESS.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WOMANLINESS.

UNDER Christian influences woman finds her true place as man's companion. She is equal, but different. The difference is enough to cause the scales to tremble upward and downward with every change of opinion. Christianity is clear enough; but our application of it is not always wise. For myself, I hail with gladness the new tone that is being taken about woman's place and power. She has been the drudge and slave, or, at best, the puppet, and now she is to be man's equal helper in all good deeds. There will always be a vigorous, not to say an exaggerated, tone about every new movement. Many silly people dish up phrases about "woman's rights" until they have frightened themselves into the belief that some fearful social catastrophe is going to happen. We are told that woman is going to take the bread out of the mouth of man. As if she does not

know her own interests better! No! what she is going to do is to earn her own livelihood in very various ways, when that is possible, and also to stir her lords and masters to more vigorous efforts, if they want to hold their own in the keen competition of life. But look at the young men who have to go to the colonies! Well, if they wanted to stay at home in order to serve behind the draper's counter, or to sell hairpins, a voyage to the antipodes will do them no harm, and we will try to get on as best we can without them. I suppose that the colonies want colonists; and it would, indeed, be reversing nature's rules to send our unprotected females there as pioneers. Let the men go and do the rough work first.

We are not to be frightened back into the drudge and puppet stage by a bogey. Some fanciful or actual figure, all bone and sinew, very "blue" and rather masculine, is placed before us, and then we are told to see what the world is coming to. Women all bone and sinew existed, however, before the present century dawned, but they did not persuade their gentle and beautiful sisters to become like them. No woman can be the worse for possessing brains. The hue and cry set up against higher education, examinations, and new openings for woman's work has a hollow ring

about it. Men have a sneaking suspicion that they are not so intellectually superior as they have been led to suppose. Unconsciously to themselves, they are afraid of being found out. Or else, perhaps, they are lazy, and are fearful of being stirred up. An indolent young loungeur does not like to find that the ladies of his acquaintance know more than he does. A sneer is a very cheap way of avoiding an argument ; and so a light laugh about woman's rights is supposed to settle the matter from the young man's point of view.

The fears that women will absorb all the good professions are altogether unfounded. The doctors, the lawyers, the parsons, and the legislators need not anticipate a break up of the social system, because women are learning something more than music and modern French with the best Parisian accent. Nature will settle matters happily for both parties , and if we try to guide the present stream of social movement instead of stemming it, we shall do immense good to the future race of the English.

But intellect is not the greatest thing in a woman's nature ; nor is it the chief charm. If the education of girls brought into social life a set of bold and brazen-faced women, it would be time for the men to emigrate in order to escape what

would be worse than the ten plagues of Egypt. What the young women of England need, however, at the present hour is not less mind, but more. Higher education is confined principally to the middle and upper classes. Girls are under a disadvantage as compared with boys, for their schools do not possess the same endowments, and they themselves have not the same encouragements in the shape of scholarships. The ladder to higher schools is not so easily accessible for girls as for boys. Young women engaged in business do not possess the same facilities in the shape of evening classes and lectures as young men. It is easier for a young man to become intelligent than for a young woman in the same circumstances. These difficulties must tell in the long run; and instead of raising a cry against woman's education, it should be our aim to give greater facilities for its promotion.

Yet womanliness does not consist in intellectuality. The first thing in which it does consist is self-respect. This carries many womanly graces with it. Where there is self-respect there will be the beautiful bloom of modesty, and modesty will command the reverence of all right-minded people. The aping of mannish ways in dress and slang is detestable. The loud laugh,

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the striking dress, the almost hail-fellow-well-met manner, the bold stare—these are sometimes seen in barmaids, but they do not command universal admiration, and they certainly do not form a part of true womanhood. Nature and instinct teach what true refinement is ; and if they have not done so, no words here can put the reader on the right track.

No amount of arguing can change facts ; and one of the most patent of these is that woman is physically weaker than man. As far as mental energy depends on bodily strength, she will be overweighted in the race of life. Her equality arises from, and is founded on, diversity. She possesses qualities which do not belong to man, and which entirely counterbalance any disadvantages in other directions. She is naturally less coarse and rough ; she has a finer moral texture than man. She may be fonder of dress, but she is less inclined to luxurious eating and drinking ; so that even in sensuous matters she has a more elevated tone than man. Her stronghold is purity of conscience, of social instinct, and of life-purpose. She is no money-grubber ; she is naturally more elevated in spiritual tone than man. It is her glory to have a distinctively religious nature.

What then is woman's power ? It lies in her

helpfulness. She receives deference and attention from the other sex, and is the object of the most chivalrous feelings of which the heart of man is capable. Some become in consequence mere coquettes. Their vanity is flattered, and they become the toys of society. But under such circumstances woman misses her mission. She ought to receive in order that she may give. She is protected from the rough winds and is armed with finer instincts, so that she may render perpetual and cheerful services to humanity. Her noblest characteristics are developed when she does most to increase the happiness of those around her. The young ladies who spend their mornings in embroidery, their afternoon over the last novel, their evenings in chit-chat, are not noble specimens of womanhood. Idleness and selfishness must always be a curse, and the curse becomes all the more conspicuous in the gentler sex, because the height to which woman can rise is the measure to which she can fall.

It is not our province to specify the spheres of woman's activity. For the most part these specify themselves. When a woman becomes a wife and a mother, she finds full and ennobling occupation for all her moral energies. With regard to that large class who do not see their work at home,

a little earnest reflection and observation are all that is necessary. There is often much cant and monotonous repetition of phrases about woman's mission. A Sunday school class is not the solution of every feminine difficulty. There are many who have neither taste nor aptitude for the common forms of Christian work, and who imagine that they are, therefore, shut out from helping others. But this is by no means the case. Woman is quick in invention, and there is no reason why she should not strike out fresh paths according to circumstances. Where there is a will there is a way.

There could hardly be a nobler sight than a true woman. She sets the tone of a nation ; she is the real queen. No people need fear decadence where the purest instincts and influences of womanhood prevail. She rules by that quiet and subtle spiritual force which none can define, and which only the most brutal can defy. Her sphere is the soul of man, and so whatever man touches comes under her spell. Her power is that of the affections, and hence the infinite hopes and strifes of life are illuminated, not to say irradiated, by her queenly supremacy. . We may discuss her mission, dispute about the exact nature of her soul, laugh at her conceits, flatter her vanity, affect to be indifferent to her opinion ; but every real man has to bow

*before the silent force of her exalted and intuitional purity. What could woman want more? **This** is enough for human ambition. She rules the race for good or ill. Only let woman be her true self, and, by the blessing of God, she must be the centre of golden thoughts and inspirations.

MANLINESS.

CHAPTER XXX.

MANLINESS.

THE Maker of man must have had some conception of what He wanted man to be. If we could get to know God's idea of what man is, we should have an accurate and a complete conception of manliness. Sometimes there is a dispute as to the meaning of an obscure passage in a poem, or perhaps of the whole poem itself; and it is felt that if we could only obtain information at first hand from the poet himself, all obscurity would be removed, and all debate would be at an end. Whether we can obtain information as to the Divine idea of humanity, it is, in any case, an advantage to remember that there is such an idea. For when we do so we shall at least not rest satisfied with any partial notions of our own, or with any of the crude suggestions of thinkers around us. We thankfully accept their commentaries on the poem, but we hope to obtain the interpretation of

the Poet Himself—if not now, at least in the coming age.

But with an open Bible before us, with the life of the Perfect Man written from a fourfold point of view, with the moral sense within our own souls, enabling us to measure and estimate the men of the past, who shall say that knowledge is impossible? It is practice which is hard, not knowledge. It is the application of the idea which mocks our effort; the idea itself shines like a sun in the heavens. God grant that we may never fall into that lowest slough of scepticism, when men say that they do not know what men ought to be.

If we search out the Divine idea, we shall find the following elements in it:—

1. Man was made to be a dependent being. Manliness cannot exist apart from the recognition of this great and primal fact. Our first superficial thought is that manliness must necessarily mean independence. Man is a lord and master. To be a man is to be strong. But this is not the first nor the chief thing about man. If he is a dependent being, it will not suffice to begin by stating his independence. The broad and beautiful river, with its majestic tide and mighty currents, strikes the beholder as a thing of power. But the thoughtful man wants to know more about its essence and

nature ; and he traverses its banks mile after mile, through lowly valleys, in the midst of dense forests, up the sides of steep mountains ; and there, amid the silent glaciers and by the side of cold springs, he finds the beginnings of the river. To him the dependence of the mighty tides on these far-away streams is more wonderful than the tides themselves, as they sweep out with resistless pride to the sea. So it is with man.

You say, " Behold the power of man. See the cities which he has built, the ships he has constructed, the mines he has opened, the railways he has laid down, the mountains he has scaled, the sculptures and pictures he has produced, the books he has written." And all this would be significant and amazing, and also sufficient, if man stood at the very beginning of the chain. But man is only a link. What is there behind and beyond man ? If there is a something, it is our duty to recognize it and make it a part of our idea of manliness.

Man is dependent on God. Man was made. Man is a creature. Man is an agent. Man is partly, indeed, a creative will ; but still more he is a channel of power, an instrument by which Divine force is exerted. And he is in this condition *constantly*. There are some who imagine that man is like a clock, which, once wound up, seems to go on by its

own inward force. But even a clock is only apparently independent. Its spring was made not by itself, but by an external power. We are as much dependent on God as the stone in your hand is dependent on your grasp to keep it from falling. We are as much dependent upon Him as the branch is upon the trunk and root of the tree.

If men say that they cannot believe this, or that they cannot brook the idea, God has a thousand ways of bringing the matter home to their consciousness. Men may be successful in business, everything they touch may turn to gold, and they may in the pride of their hearts say that they are quite independent of God. But a sore sickness befalls them ; success palls upon them ; and they see that there is a Power higher than their own, that can take away their boasted possessions, or make those possessions positively distasteful to them. There are many who wake to find that their mode of life has been a delusion and a dream, and that their idea of manliness has been defective in the very first essential.

Manliness, then, consists in this consciousness of dependence. For our ideas of religious truth we are dependent on God. The experiment of trying to find truth without help, without Divine authority, has been tried on a large and on a small scale ;

but it has always signally failed. Men light their torches to look for the day, but they only make the darkness visible. Young men are bruising themselves sadly in these night-exploits, determined, as they say, to do without the "old lights," and to find and fight their own way. They read the magazines, and skim here and there a book of "advanced thought;" and they get muddled and perplexed. If we read these productions let us do so in the daylight of revelation. Revelation is the chief element in our existence. The God on whom we depend has spoken, has uncovered His glory, has manifested His character, has uttered His will. Our prayer to Him, our trust in Him, will reveal to us the chief element in our nature; that of our dependence.

Manliness is a recognition that our life is dependent on God. Manliness derives its power from truth; and if it be true that our very existence is, as it were, the breath of God's nostrils, we ought as a mere matter of sincerity to recognize this. By life I mean, above all, the life of the Spirit, the life and activity of the religious faculty. It is not till this is awakened that we begin to be men. A man alive in body and alive in mind is only half a man. Winter and frost seal up the energies of nature: the trees are bare, the seeds lie still, the rivers cease to

flow, the cattle crouch in their sheds from the biting wind. When the spring comes the world's forces are unloosed ; nature arouses herself ; she puts on her bright array. So when God's love takes possession of a man, it wakes up and invigorates all his sleeping faculties. He is a new man ; that is, he is at length a man. There is no true manhood outside religion. Men may bluster about doing as they like ; they may pass the wine decanter and crack their jokes about the weaknesses of religious people ; they may sport and gamble and clap you on the shoulder as a "good fellow," and tell you to be a man ; but what are *they* ? Only superior animals. They have speech, but when you think of the vile uses to which they put their gift, you cannot but think that the *dumb* creatures have an advantage over them. They walk erect ; but their minds grovel. Fine animals I grant ! But you want to be a man. Count it, then, your glory to kneel before your Maker. Fellowship with Him, dependence on Him, pardon from Him, filial love to Him, communion with His Son our Lord—this is life ; and life is manliness.

2. A man is a helpful being. Helpfulness is the sign of true manliness. Self-assertive strength is not the sign of true manhood. Some use their strength as a cudgel with which to deal blows to all

and several. The Irishman in Donnybrook Fair, wielding his shillelagh about him and breaking many skulls, is hardly a model to be copied. It is true that a man is a strong being. But how is his strength to be employed? He derives it from God; he spends it on man.

Our depraved and barbarous idea is that man should be a help-receiver. In low forms of society the most fortunate and most honoured member of the community is the one who receives the greatest amount of homage and assistance. The greatest pauper is the greatest man; the one who is most dependent on his fellows is the king. This is the Turkish idea of a man. The Sultan has a household that costs, so it is said, about two millions annually; he has thousands of slaves to wait upon him, and the government seems to exist, not, as with us, for the good of the people, but for the benefit of the ruler. But what a miserable travesty of our nature is such a state of things! There you have the supposed man, less by a long way than a man.

But social autocrats amongst ourselves are very little better in essence. It is proverbial that men who have lived long in India, who have ordered their servants about like slaves, are very overbearing in their manners when they return to

England. They become unbearable. Their idea of life is to get all they can from their fellows and to give as little. And this class is by no means confined to those who have been exposed to the exceptional temptations of Eastern countries. The selfish old bachelor is a type of what we mean; and the unselfish old bachelor is the contrast of what we mean. Ladies who drive their servants and dressmakers to death are types of the selfish class; and those employers who show every consideration to their so-called "inferiors" are specimens of real men.

God's idea of manhood is ministry. He has not made the angels merely to play their harps, and to sun themselves in the glories of heaven. They are sent forth to minister. So it is with man. The Divine Man became a minister. He gave His life a ransom. In this He was showing what was God's idea of our functions. We have to serve, to help, to minister. This is manliness.

3. A man is a pure being. Manliness means purity. Having a complex nature, it is man's duty to keep the lower part subordinate to the higher. Pure he cannot be without the cleansing of the pure Spirit of God. Foulness and stain are upon him till he comes to the cleansing Fountain of the Divine Love. He does not begin life without

weights and hindrances, without a bias and a tendency in favour of evil. Describe man as he is, and you will say that he is an impure, imperfect, frail being. Describe him as he ought to be, and you will say 'that, according to the Divine conception, he ought to be "pure as the naked heavens," white as the newly fallen snow. The body, with its appetites and passions, is to be the instrument of the soul and the servant of righteousness. As every part of a vessel moves according to the captain's command, so the consecrated will is to be regal in the man. He is to eat and drink to the Lord.

Christianity found the Gentiles, especially, with foul bodies—bodies given up to all kinds of bad passions and unspeakable vices. What did Christianity say? Why, that the body was a temple of the Holy Ghost. Picture to yourself the temple of Solomon. How far superior it was to all the dwellings that clustered about the sides of Mount Zion! Gaze on the cathedral at Milan. How splendidly it towers above the streets of that interesting city! How gloriously its pinnacles and sculptures pierce the blue of the morning sky! How white and chaste is the marble of which it is built, piled up like blocks of snow! It is a temple. Let nothing defile it. Let it be a poem

in marble amid the din of business, and the strains of sacred music, and the clash of arms, and the perturbations of politics. Let the rains of heaven wash it, and the dews weep tears of joy over it, and the moon bathe it with her soft beams, and the sun shine upon it gloriously. It is a temple. And you are a temple, built up by God's hands, faculty on faculty, power on power, capacity on capacity, soul on body, and spirit on both soul and body, white and pure and clean. Be worthy of yourself and of your Maker.

To be other than clean and chaste is to be a slave, not a man. To be greedy after money, so that cash shall be the chief thought in the brain from morning till night—this is miserliness, not manliness. To be absorbed by business, so that the shop shall form the terminal lines of your thought and action—this is to be a *tradesman* and not a man. To be a bundle of bad habits, so that the wine-glass, the cigar, the theatre, the race-course, the card-table, and worse places still, shall be greater than your *self*—this is to be a poor serf of the devil's, held at a demon's will ; it is not a man's heritage. Oh, be a man !

4 A man is a well-proportioned being. Manliness means development. The ancient athlete was duly developed physically. Arms and legs,

bone, sinew, nerve, and muscle, all were under command, and all did their proper part when the time of combat came. But a physical frame may be under training, while mind, soul, and spirit lie entirely uncared for. The secret of life lies in due and well-ordered development of all our powers. The difficulty of life lies in having so often "to draw the line" between the higher and the lower. The farmer has to do this constantly in his land. The pastures can be left at certain periods to take care of themselves, while he gives attention to the arable land. When he has ploughed and sowed, he turns his attention to the outbuildings. In a little while he can look after repairs in the farmhouse. And all the while he must preserve his own health, as the centre of all prosperity. What is your centre? You must "draw the line;" you must take observations, and preserve the proper proportions. There is an order in your nature. Begin at the lowest, and you will see that the order is something like the following:—the *physical*, the *emotional*, the *imaginative*, the *intellectual*, the *moral*, and the *spiritual*. Keep the spiritual in order as the centre of all, live to God as the main-spring of all your power, and take the other parts of your nature in their proper order. If you like to classify your faculties in an ascending scale, it

may be done under such heads as these: the *senses*, the *perceptions*, the *feelings*, the *judgment*, the *will*, the *conscience* or *moral sense*, the *affections*, the *religious faculty* of dependence. The true man is he who has all these faculties duly educated and developed. The man is like a well-ordered public school; those that can learn least are in the lowest forms, and by an ascending series you come to that which is intrinsically highest.

5. A man is a courageous being. Manliness means courage. The physical courage, of which so much is sometimes made, is that which we possess in common with the lion and the tiger. Barbarians show as much physical bravery as civilized beings. By courage we do not mean that impudence and brazen effrontery which reckless men often show. There are many who, lost to all shame, bandy about hard terms and epithets in public or private life, and who are merely loud because they know that they are in the wrong. All this bluster is first cousin to cowardice. Such men have lost care for wholesome public opinion; but their cheeks blanch in the face of the great facts of life—God, judgment, eternity.

The central inspiration of true bravery is righteous principle. To be on God's side, to be doing His will, to have strong faith in His rule,

to fix an unfaltering gaze on His great judgment, to dare to obey Him at all hazards—this is bravery. Joseph was such a man when he refused to sin against God. Daniel was such a man when he prayed three times a day to His God as heretofore, although the king's decree, which was to consign him to a horrible death, was signed and sealed. Luther was such a man when, at the Diet of Worms, he said, "Here I stand. I can do no other, God help me." And you will be such a man if to every temptation you say, "I can't," and to every tempter, however friendly, "No." Moral principle within your very soul shall give courage and honesty to all your dealings in outward conduct. In one word, you will be the very type of manliness.

"Who is the honest man?

He that doth still and strongly good pursue,
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true ;

Whom neither force nor fawning can
Unpin or wrench, from giving all their due.

"Whom none can work nor woo,
To use in anything a trick or sleight,
For above all things he abhors deceit :

His words and works and fashion too,
All of a piece, and all are clear and straight.

LIVING TO GOD.

CHAPTER XXXI

LIVING TO GOD.

IN the previous chapters I have spoken very little directly about religion. There are many books which treat of this all-important subject in a way that certainly cannot be surpassed. I have therefore felt it my duty to dwell on subjects which were less often treated in books written for young men and women. But I have a profound conviction that personal religion is at the root of all real prosperity and happiness. It is only as we obey God and keep His commandments that we can expect to pass our years here with any satisfaction. The secular side of life can only be made beautiful by due attention to sacred claims. Our great and supreme duty is to live to God.

To a casual eye one man's life looks very much like another. They are like two pictures hanging side by side in a gallery: both are seen to have colour and lines, and to represent a landscape.

~~But~~ on closer inspection one is a mere daub, and the other is a work of genius. So two men may be working side by side, doing apparently the same things ; but on close inspection one is seen to be a mere machine, and the other is inspired by a Divine purpose. All workers at first seem like drudges. There is nothing noble in mere labour. A machine turns out so much finished material, but the sight of it does not move our moral natures or waken our consciences to admiration. There must be purpose behind the work to make it admirable. There must be "atmosphere," tone, colouring, and elevation about the life to make us regard it as anything better than a mere piece of mechanism. It is the principle which guides practice that enables us to put a high value on what men do and say. The work is secondary to the spirit. It is not what a man does, but why he does it, that makes his life valuable or valueless.

There can be no higher principle than a desire to please and serve God. We need to have regard in what we do to persons as well as principles, or rather to persons as they embody principles. "Sin is lawlessness." The secular life ceases to be godly when it is lived apart from God, and without regard to His will. There is much practical

atheism in society. It is true that very few have reached the awful conclusion that there is no God. They have not reached it intellectually and rationally. But millions have reached that conclusion morally. To them there is practically no God at all. They never think of Him; they never pray to Him; they never make even a slight effort to please Him; they go through no preparation to meet Him. It is not easy to see this absence of vital godliness, for it may coexist with very much outward conformity to religious custom. The demons were in the synagogues in our Lord's day, and irreligious people often become attendants on God's services. But a closer knowledge than ours would detect this absence of regard for God and this neglect of the Divine Law. God is in none of their thoughts and ways.

It is a sublime moment in the history of a man when he first believes in the Invisible, when he first trembles at the thought of the Unseen. What new powers shake his soul! What new forces awaken within his moral nature! It is then that he first begins to feel that he is something more than a machine. He is a man. New and inexpressible thoughts enter the mind when we first visit another country. It is a shock—one, doubtless, that is very pleasurable—to find that there

are populations whose habits, customs, modes of thought, forms of government, climate, language, and religion are all so different from our own. And what the eye sees in a new country, that the faith sees in a new world. Eternity is a great word. Heaven and hell stand for tremendous facts in God's universe. And as men think of that word, and of those two worlds, their hearts are taken by storm. Life at length is inspired with a new idea.

But this sublime idea does not take shape till men believe in God. The eternity above, beneath, or before us is a shapeless immensity till we see a Person. And it is a grander moment in a man's thought and inner life when he begins to feel that God has a plan concerning him. For no mere dream about God as the Governor of the universe will suffice to awaken the religious faculties into holy exercise. We must see that there are films of thought and affection going out toward us from God, and from us to God. Living to God can only arise from an honest and thorough belief in God. There is something in our lives which frightens us back from the belief in God's personal care and special love. We seem to be mere specks on the globe of life. Measuring ourselves by material methods, we can but be mere dust in the balance.

But by moral standards we may see ourselves to be infinitely dear to God. Our daily duties, which seem only like the monotonous turning of wheels in a factory, are then seen to be tasks assigned us by a Wisdom that is infinite. We rid ourselves of the overwhelming pressure of material greatness and littleness, and are content to take God's own estimate of us.

God tells us that He designs His will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. And this purpose is to be accomplished through the co-operation of the wills of men. We may help forward or hinder God's designs. In any case we must be unconscious instruments of carrying out God's purpose. But by living to God, I mean a conscious, intelligent, and self-chosen resolve to do God's will and to get it done on earth. And it is in this region of the will that one life differs from another. If we weigh out merchandise, we may do it because we feel it to be God's will ; or if we till the land, we may do it because we believe that God designs the earth to bring forth food for man and beast. He who refers all the actions of his life to the will of God is the man who is living to God.

Now let us see how this simple principle is likely to work. First of all, it will certainly make the man ask whether the will of God has been made known.

Determined to do it, he will spare no effort to find out what it is. And since men have never found out God's will by their own natural efforts, he will see how necessary a supernatural communication must be. The simple principle laid down above, will compel a man to a more eager search after God's revealed will. And it is possible that by a kind of intuition he will come at once to Christ, God's only Son, through Whom not only is God's will communicated, but in Whom God dwelt in all fulness. Many do not arrive at this conclusion, except after much battling and inquiry. But most men who simply and sternly determine to do God's will find that there is no other way of getting practically to know that will except through Jesus Christ. Life is too short for long, tedious processes of reasoning. We must determine instantly whether Christ is fitted to be the world's Master and Saviour, and whether we will choose Him as our Divine Law-giver. Belief in God brings belief in Christ. He who is resolute to find out God's commandments and to obey them, will soon discover that practically he has no choice but to obey, trust, and adore Christ.

This religion will in its springs be unseen. It will rise in the secret places of the heart. It is not an ostentation. It does not consist of cant and of

pious phraseology. It is not talking about God, but talking to God. There will be what the Germans awkwardly call the God-consciousness. The thought of God's presence and authority will fill and haunt the soul. There will be no place, no purpose, no pastime, no fellowship where God is not. And that Presence will be voluntarily sought by the soul. All religious people have been men and women of prayer. They have had a splendid belief that the great God could hear them and answer them. They have poured out sorrows, joys, difficulties, triumphs, wistful longings after holiness in the ears of God; and they have united in the confidence that there would be a response on the part of God. Full of complexity and variety as their lives have been, they have been at one in their practice of prayer. Different as may have been their theories about the efficacy and use of prayer, still, as a matter of fact, they have prayed. Abraham the emigrant, David the shepherd, Daniel the statesman, Isaiah the prophet, lived under very different circumstances, but they all felt the need of communing with a personal God. Prayer stamps a man. It is God's mint, where His image is put once more on human souls.

But the Christian religion ought to have as a distinctive mark a warm and evangelical love to

Christ. Much might still be said on what John Foster called "the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion." It is sometimes presented in such a form that the sensibilities of cultivated persons are wounded, and all reasonings and all the dictates of common sense are set at defiance. But it still remains true that New Testament religion is evangelical Christianity. It presents Jesus Christ, not merely as man, but as God manifest in the flesh. It presents His death, not merely as a martyrdom, but as an atonement for sin ; and it presents the miracle of the resurrection as the crown and consummation of God's revelation of mercy to a lost world.

If these things be so, the effect on men's minds ought to be commensurate with the facts. There should be, and there will be, warmth of emotion and ardour of affection in those who thoroughly accept these revelations of Divine love. Young men often fancy that religion consists in argument, in debate, or in intellectual search. It is summed up in loving. He who loves Christ most is the best Christian. There will be ardour, flame, and enthusiasm in our consecration, if our souls have been once possessed by God's love.

And loving Christ men will love His words. They will become students of the Scriptures. The

mind will feed itself with truth, and the wasting forces of the affection will replenish themselves at the cross of Christ. Modern literature, with all its fascination, will not put the Bible in the shade. Religious people find that they cannot sustain the Christian life except at the services of Christian truth.

The results of such an inward life must be seen in outward action. Living to God and living to men are the antitheses which distinguish two different human courses. This contrast is very marked in public men. One is seen making self the pole-star of all his actions, putting aside obstacles that would have daunted souls of inferior courage, bending men of all kinds to his purposes, climbing higher and higher in the social and political scale, until he becomes the wonder of a nation. The other is seen taking up some despised but righteous cause, advocating it amid a tempest of ridicule, holding on his way amidst the most virulent abuse and amidst the cold indifference of friends ; and, by small instalments, accomplishing his purposes, or perhaps dying before they are finally attained.

What we see on a large, broad scale in public life, we may see, if we have eyes, on the smaller scale of the lives with which we come into daily contact. One man will lay himself out to please

his neighbours. He will make no enemies; say nothing that will offend the most scrupulous susceptibilities; he will be soft and yielding and mild; and everybody will pronounce him to be a pleasant and agreeable companion. And yet at the root of this dulcet disposition there is the worm of selfishness. No one will be able to remember the cause of justice which he has defended at his own risk, or the unpopular side which he has been among the first to take up. No! scratch away all this pleasantness, and, like Tito in "Romola," he will be seen to be the embodiment of self-seeking.

But, on the other hand, a man who is living to God is not ever concerning himself about immediate success. He strives to do right, and to do what is right in God's sight. As a consequence, his toil is more cheerfully and thoroughly done. A Christian bricklayer will not scamp his work. A Christian builder will not endanger the health of occupiers by imperfection in drains and walls. A Christian tradesman will not adulterate his goods and sell under false pretences. Men will be willing to suffer the loss of all things rather than disobey Christ, and forfeit the possession of His righteousness.

Living to God leads men to see that God lives for us. Life is meant for education. It is not a

playground, but a place of discipline ; and our work is successful if it yields us the kind of moral riches which we need. Money is not made fast, as a rule, because slow and patient toil is just what our spirits need to bring them into subjection to the will of God. Our homes are happy, but not too happy ; they are places of joy, but also of anxiety ; they are havens of rest, but also schools of moral discipline. The two sides of life are nicely balanced, so that we may get the best that God has to give. Were we loaded with luxuries, we should be like spoiled children. Were we bowed down beneath the yoke of work, we should be mere bond-slaves. The elements of life are adjusted for us by God's thought. In other words, God lives and plans for us. And though we cannot know the reason why of everything, yet, having seized the fact that He is our Father, we can always believe that all things work together for good.

To live to God is to love what God loves, and to seek what God seeks. In these days we have to restore in some measure the lost idea of Christ's Church. The ancient altars are broken down. The pathetic ideal of society which is presented to us in the Acts of the Apostles has fled ; it is a dream of the past. Modern civilization makes so many demands on our social instincts, and

railways tend to disturb social equilibrium so greatly, that our Church life has inevitably suffered. Men do not get into a white heat of love about the Church now. It would by some Christian people be considered the mark of folly or weakness to sacrifice very much to the Christian brotherhood. But this altered tone bodes no good. Whatever our social difficulties, it is still our duty to love the Christian brotherhood. The lives that are best worth living are those which have been spent in the service of Christ's Church. Men and women get an elevation of heart, and a serious joy in their character, when they accustom themselves to cultivate the spiritual affinities which bind God's people to one another. They are not taken out of the world by such communion, but they are masters amongst us. It is evident that they are not of the world. We must not leave the Church to be managed by clerics. It is Christ's society, and it is a joyful thing to belong to it, and to throw our energies into its missionary enterprise, and to profit by its Christian friendship.

Soon Church and world, home and business, will have passed away. We are travellers—to a great and mighty kingdom. By the side of its august powers all earthly thrones shrink into insignificance; by comparison with its felicity and

anguish all human labour seems but a dream. Its solemnity and its joy consist in the fact that it is the meeting-place of the soul with God. What vast throngs have already gone before us! How perpetual is the stream of emigrants to that other shore! Every man must have considered at some time the passage which he himself will have to make to that unknown region. How will he die, and when, and where? And, above all, what will be the hereafter?

Our life is given us here that we may know how to live there. The life of eternity cannot, we think, be essentially different from this one. It will, so we conjecture, be the doing of God's will. But how will it be, if we have disobeyed that will here? We shall not know how to live. True life will be an impossibility, unless we are allowed to begin again. And what hope is there of this? Our present existence is long enough and full of opportunity enough for all wise purposes. To live to God now is the best and only preparation for the vision of God hereafter. And who can doubt the happiness of those who have learned that art below? They found here a joy too deep for words; they knew the secret of the Divine life; they felt the profound peace which comes from harmony with the Divine will. And in more per-

fect^{ed} favouring conditions they continue the same life hereafter. We heap up about them all the sentences of hope, rest, peace, joy, and radiant light which our hearts can conjecture ; and we do well. There can be no exaggeration in such cases. And this will be our lot, for ever and for ever, if, trusting to Christ as our Saviour, and receiving the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier, we serve our generation according to the will of God. The secular and the sacred mingling in one stream of life here will flow into God's own love hereafter ; and losing self in Him, and yet retaining our identity, we shall for an eternity of bliss live unto God.

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